Commentary

Volume Forty-nine, Number Three, March 1970

NIXON SO FAR — MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

LITERARY GANGSTERS — GORE VIDAL

THE POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE — ROBERT LEKACHMAN

THE U.S., THE ARABS & ISRAEL — ANTHONY HARTLEY

NOSTALGIA ON BROADWAY — JACK RICHARDSON

INTERMARRIAGE & JEWISH SURVIVAL — MARSHALL SKLARE

THE FUTURE OF PREDICTION — JOHN P. SISK

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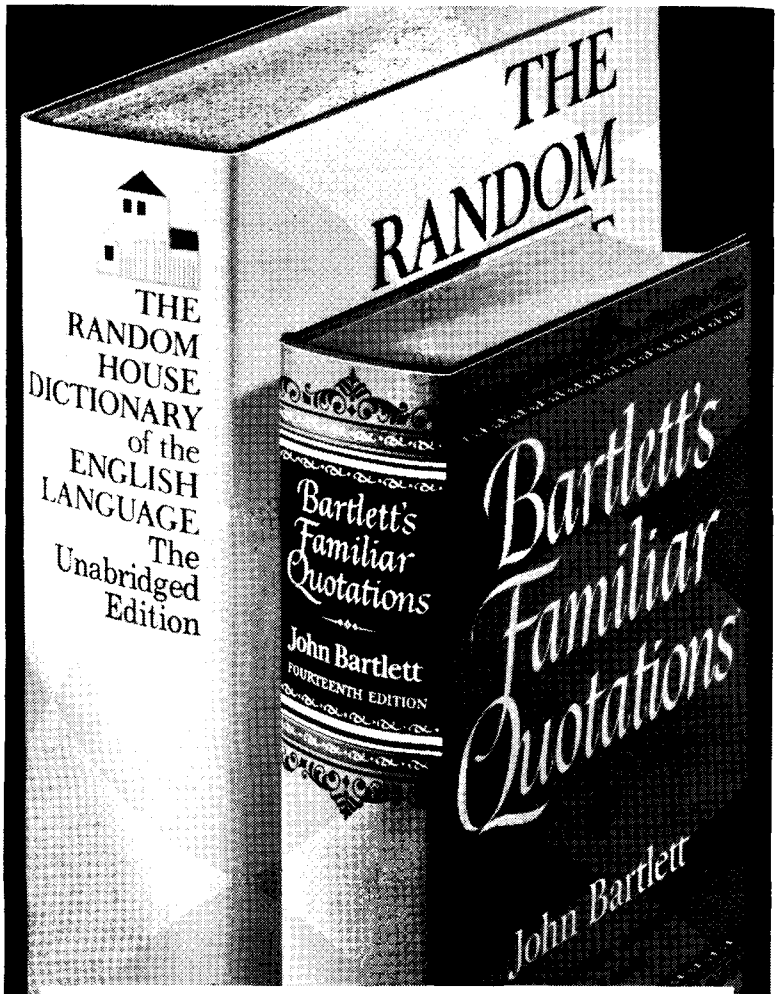

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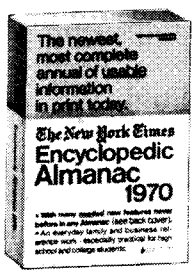

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Schlesinger, Chomsky, Abel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Chomsky is almost one's favorite sputterer; but does he not sputter on a little long these days? Yet, in his thousands of words of explanation ["Letters from Readers," February], he does not get round to answering the two simple questions I put to him in the December 1969 COMMENTARY. Like the squid, he covers his retreat in a cloud of black ink.

My first question had to do with his King Charles's head, the Truman speech of March 6, 1947. In *American Power and the New Mandarins*, pages 318-19, Dr. Chomsky cites that speech to prove that the United States for twenty years had planned to use "its awesome resources of violence and devastation to impose its passionately held ideology and its approved form of social organization on large areas of the world." This seems an extraordinary distortion of a speech in which, so far as I can see, President Truman was pleading with American business to renounce its traditional protectionism and permit American membership in the UN's International Trade Organization.

One now notes that Dr. Chomsky's most recent explanation silently abandons the claim made in his book: we hear no more about Truman's speech as proving an American intention to impose free enterprise by fire and sword. Under his cloud of ink, Dr. Chomsky is sneaking out of his hopelessly untenable position in an effort to find a better hole. But his new hole is hardly more defensible. Rather than go on any more about this banal and unimportant speech, I would simply beg any interested bystander to read the text (it is in President Truman's *Public Papers* for 1947, pp. 167-72) and decide for himself the question of veracity between Dr. Chomsky and me. I cannot resist, however, pointing out that poor old Chomsky, in his current sputter, misquotes Truman yet again (in his paragraph E). Can he not get anything right?

My second question to Dr. Chomsky was to ask why he finds the International Trade Organization and the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act such monstrous ideas and what, if he considers economic multilateralism so horrible, he would put in their place. He evades the first part of the question and answers the second by referring me to page 347 of his book. I turned eagerly to the sacred text in the hope of finding out how the prophet assesses the relative merits of multilateralism vs. bilateralism vs. autarky. So far as I can see, after prayerful reading, he does not mention the subject at all. Again I beg your readers to check for themselves. Will Professor Chomsky some time tell us straight out whether he is for or against the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act and for or against American membership in the International Trade Organization?

In another of his sputters, Dr. Chomsky asserts that I wrote that one of his statements " 'makes evident' his belief that 'in his conduct of foreign policy, Franklin Roosevelt was striving to serve the very moneyed interests who were fighting him so savagely at home.' " Can he get *nothing* right? What I wrote was that his view of American foreign policy "*requires him to believe* (as his footnote on the Far Eastern Policy of the 30's makes evident) that, in his conduct of foreign policy, Franklin Roosevelt" and so on. This is what I mean by the prophet's unbeatable instinct for distortion. Indeed, he himself almost acknowledges that his general view of American foreign policy requires him, as a matter of logic, to hold this belief about FDR; thus he writes that this thesis, "when properly reformulated," might well be true.

There is no point in trying to deal with all Dr. Chomsky's misrepresentations; it would make my letter as long and as boring as his. His comment, with regard to the exposure of his fake Truman quotations, about Schlesinger's "elaborate pretense that he couldn't find the quotes, that I had invented them," is an easily demonstrable lie. In my review of Chomsky's book (*Book World*, March 23, 1969), I traced the quotes to Fleming and Warburg, pointing out that "the first quotation does not appear on the page cited in Fleming and may well have been invented by Chomsky"—a point he has more or less conceded. Dr. Chomsky's assertion that, in my views of Vietnam, I am to the "hawkish side of the Pentagon," not to mention his point that I

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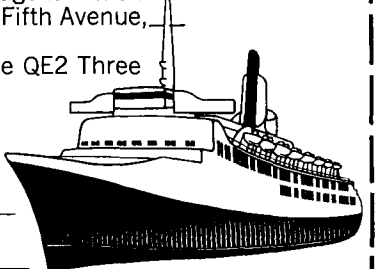

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simultaneously remind him of a "Stalinist hack," are amply illustrative of his qualities of observation and taste.

No doubt Dr. Chomsky, as the self-designated conscience of American academia, feels that any form of disagreement with him is a species of *lèse majesté*. But he really must understand that self-righteous sputter is no substitute for reasoned discussion, and that mindless invective is the usual resort of those who can't think of sensible things to say.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

A friend has called my attention to the role my book, *The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, 1941*, played in the Chomsky-Abel controversy ["Vietnam, the Cold War & Other Matters," October 1969]. I cannot adequately express my profound indifference to this controversy—my feeling is "a plague on both your *jihads*"—and to the opinions of these gentlemen on my book. . . .

I am nevertheless intrigued by Mr. Abel's reasons for finding my book superficial, slanted, and far from standard; they make me wonder whether he read it at all. He writes: "The author's view is that the United States should have appeased the Japanese and have opposed them on China. He scarcely tries to foresee what would have happened in Europe if Japan and the other Axis powers had not declared war against the United States. And if Americans could regard China as expendable, why should they not have regarded the Soviet Union as expendable?" If this is an example of the objectivity and dispassion Mr. Abel calls for in discussion, I am not impressed. My view, clearly understood by all reviewers, was that some important leaders in the Japanese government were trying to appease us, and that we might have given them more encouragement in the attempt; that there were other ways of supporting China besides going to war with Japan; and that it would not help China to accept war over the China issue if, as was the case, we did not intend to fight the war in a way that could give China any immediate help. I described at considerable length how the United States moved into undeclared naval war with Germany in the Atlantic in late 1941, while Japan ignored her alliance obliga-

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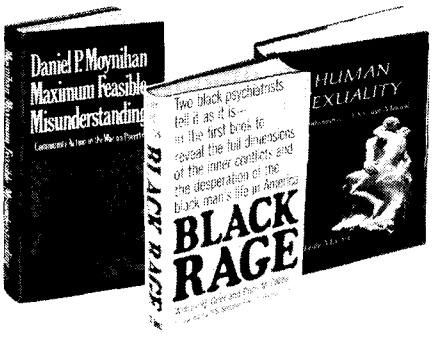
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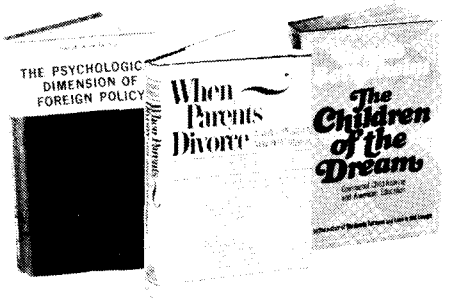

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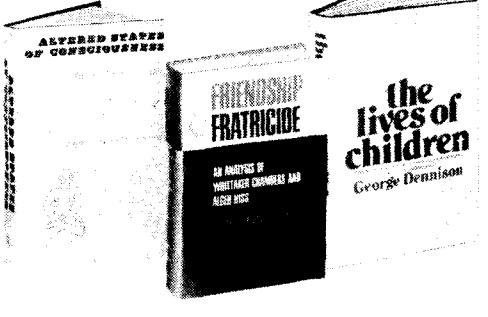

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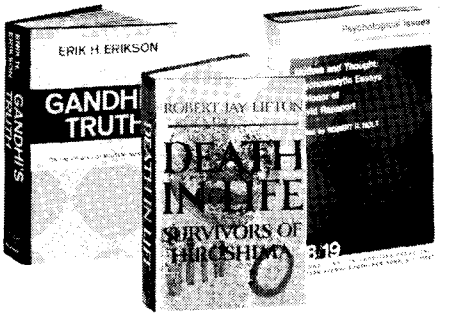

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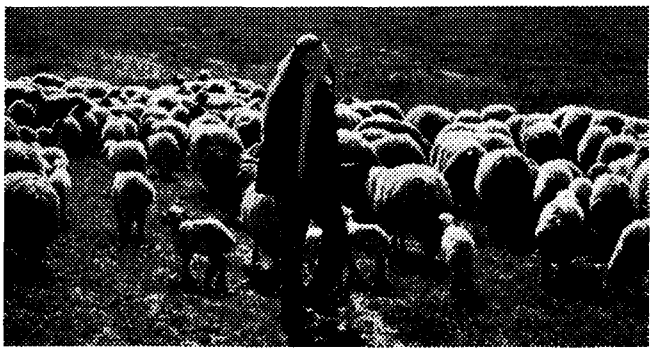

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tions and Germany's pleas to stop us; what could have happened, therefore (insofar as it is safe to "foresee" events in history), was that we could have gone to war with Germany without being attacked by Japan for it. I never said that China was expendable; I did say, and still would, that the Soviet Union was vital to the strategic interests of the United States against the main enemy, Germany, as China was not.

More important, Mr. Abel chides me for letting my preconceptions blind me to the importance of something he calls World Fascism at work in the Axis alliance. I did fail to find this. So did F. C. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia*; Frank W. Iklé, *German-Japanese Relations, 1936-1940*; Ernst L. Presseisen, *Germany and Japan, 1933-1941*; and Joanna Meskill, *Hitler and Japan: The Hollow Alliance*. They all find very little ideological feeling of kinship between Germany and Japan, and emphasize the selfishness and opportunism with which both powers, especially Japan, treated each other, even during the war. Mr. Abel, apparently possessed of esoteric knowledge about profound forces at work in the world not revealed to the lowly historian dependent on documents, will presumably find these works also substandard, though, like mine, "reputable enough in a scholarly sense." May I ask what reputability he desires other than scholarly—moral? ideological?

PAUL W. SCHROEDER
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I cannot help but comment on one aspect of the Chomsky-Abel exchange. . . .

I was raised on such "radical" periodicals as *PM*. If my memory serves me correctly, it was the Left during the 1940's which constantly equated Japan with Nazi Germany and which did not oppose, nay even urged that we bomb Japan into submission. Indeed, checking back on *PM* for the period of the mass firebomb raids in 1944-1945, I find that the only concern of that selective humanitarian, I. F. Stone, was that we might reach some compromise settlement with Japan which would allow them to retain the emperor. By and large, the only people who urged that we not take a Manichean view of the sit-

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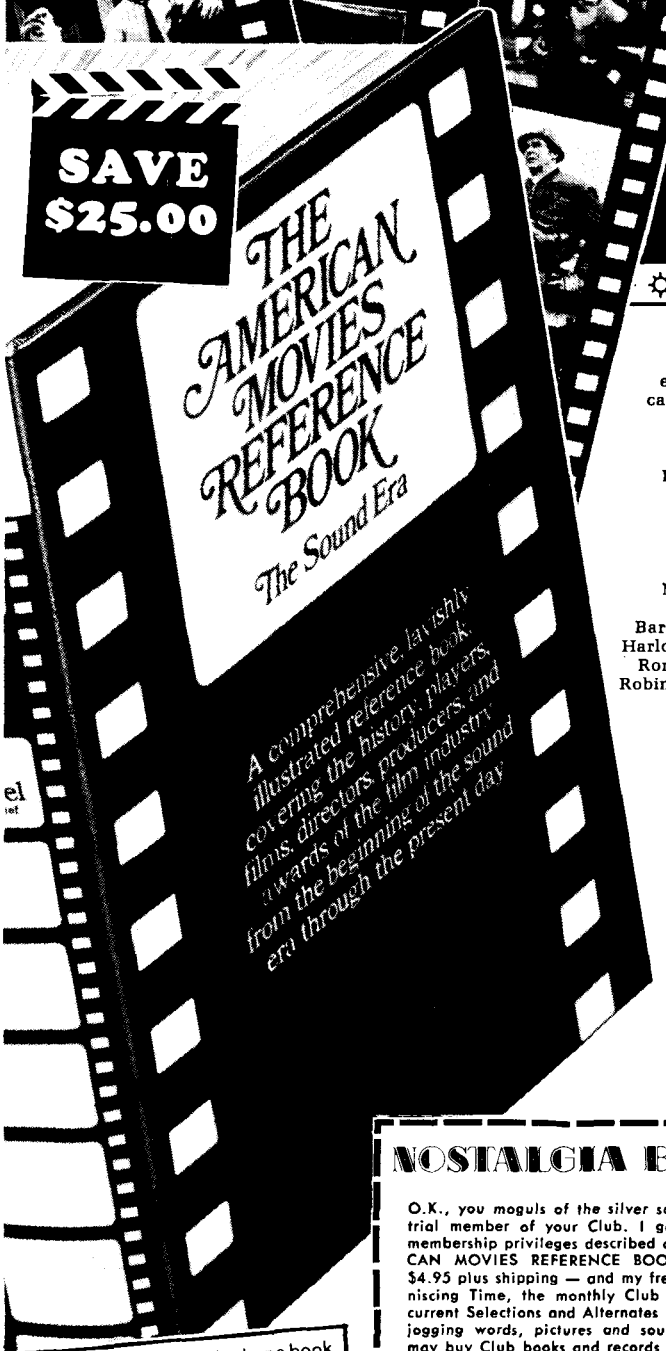
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uation were conservatives—with a few honorable exceptions such as Norman Thomas.

In short it was the left-wing intellectual establishment, centered in New York, which helped create the image of the Japanese as nonhuman monsters. If the average American, including politicians, bought this image during a time of total war, their responsibility is far smaller.

For Chomsky and others like him to berate the United States as an entity for any policies adopted during that period is the height of hypocrisy.

STANLEY ROTHMAN
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to make two observations on Noam Chomsky's article in your October 1969 issue and on some of this scholar's other political writings.

First, let me point out that Mr. Chomsky's criticisms have been somewhat inconsistent. If one reads his article in *Liberation* [November 1969] on the Palestine Arabs and Israel, he will be impressed, if he knows the Middle East somewhat, as I do, by the difference in quality between it and the article in COMMENTARY. . . . Whereas in the COMMENTARY article and elsewhere, Mr. Chomsky expresses an attitude of extreme hostility to virtually all American leaders who are not of the Left, in the *Liberation* article he shows little such discrimination vis-à-vis Arabs not of the Left. One cannot avoid feeling that Mr. Chomsky takes the Arabs very seriously and respectfully, so much so that he is willing to drop his own ideological position (more or less) at times when that hinders his effort to understand the Arabs' attitudes. He knows full well that the very survival of Jewry in Palestine is predicated on rigorously unsentimental analysis of Arab thinking on the subject—all Arab thinking, not just that of the Left.

My second observation is that Mr. Chomsky makes no such effort in regard to American thinking—not merely that of American leadership, but that of ordinary, middle-class, suburban-oriented white Americans as well, who must number in the tens of millions. If a person were to point out this neglectfulness, Mr. Chomsky would probably state that the opinions of such middle-class Americans on the cold war and on American foreign policy (insofar as they conflict with his own opinions anyway) are of little or no "relevance" because the people who hold them are not thinking for themselves but are merely being manipulated by their leaders. But it is apparent from the *Liberation* article that he makes no such claim with regard to the opinions of Palestine Arabs. . . .

My own feeling . . . is that very many middle-class Americans take the war in Vietnam and other problems of the cold war very seriously indeed. Otherwise, why would they accept, however grudgingly, the sacrifice of perhaps a hundred billion dollars a year on defense, and the loss of 40,000 young men? They are not limitlessly endowed with wealth or progeny. I contend that many—tens of millions—accept these sacrifices, even as they question them, for deep-seated psychological, social, and other reasons which Mr. Chomsky does not deem worthy of exploration. If he acknowledges that they exist at all, he merely writes them off as expressions of manipulation by certain monied elements in American society which wield power. But despite the tremendous domestic opposition to the war in Vietnam and other aspects of the cold war, I believe there is quite strong support for it, however defensive or latent or agonized. I also feel that the extent and nature of this support is a subject which deserves serious debate, something more than a mere blind dismissal, or acceptance, of the phenomenon of the "silent majority." . . .

CHRISTOPHER T. RAND
Kensington, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

May I register a sense of shock in connection with Arthur Schlesinger's attack on Noam Chomsky ["Letters from Readers," December 1969], ostensibly on the grounds that Mr. Chomsky did not quote properly from President Truman's speech, or did not draw sufficiently accurate inferences from what President Truman said some twenty years ago. Even assuming that Mr. Schlesinger is right and Mr. Chomsky is wrong, it is hard to understand Mr. Schlesinger's anger—and the personal invective he chose to employ to press his case. . . .

Mr. Schlesinger's method of debating the issues is all the more strange, since his more recent writings are easily subject to criticism for their highly selective quotation from other people's texts. In *The Crisis of Confidence*, for instance, Mr. Schlesinger quotes Mr. Chomsky's essays three times, each time with noted omissions of sentences that fail to convey to the reader the argument Mr. Chomsky develops in the actual text. I invite your readers to look at Mr. Schlesinger's quotations of the selected phrases from *The New Mandarins* (*Crisis*, pp. 68-9) and compare them with the unexpurgated text. . . .

One may disagree with some of Mr. Chomsky's judgments or with his overall view of American foreign policy in action. But Mr. Chomsky asks us some very important questions, which we evade or fail to answer only at our own peril. Mr. Chomsky asks us, for instance, to look at the basic assumptions of our foreign policy; at the view we have of our national interest and the policies we have followed to assert that interest throughout the world. He questions whether the theory of "inadvertence" so innocently put forward by Mr. Schlesinger to explain the depth of our involvement in Vietnam is less an explanation than an evasion. He invites us—whether we agree with him or not—to examine the reasons for our help in the overthrow of the legal government of Guatemala and our counter-insurgency forays into the Dominican Republic to fight the few Communists that were reported to be there.

It is perhaps because Mr. Schlesinger suspects that his own explanations of the more aggressive aspects of our foreign involvements have been superficial, mainly ideological, and largely devoid of the deeper historical sense, that he responds with anger rather than reason to Mr. Chomsky's criticism, and chooses to defend Mr. Truman rather than the validity of his own views. . . .

LEO BROMWICH
Van Nuys, California

[*The sequence of articles and exchanges to which the above letters refer is as follows: "The Position of Noam Chomsky," Lionel Abel, May 1969; "Vietnam, the Cold War & Other Matters," Noam Chomsky and Lionel Abel, October 1969; "Truman's Speech & Noam Chomsky," Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Letters from Readers, December 1969; and "The Truman Speech (Cont'd)," Noam Chomsky, Letters from Readers, February 1970.*—ED.]

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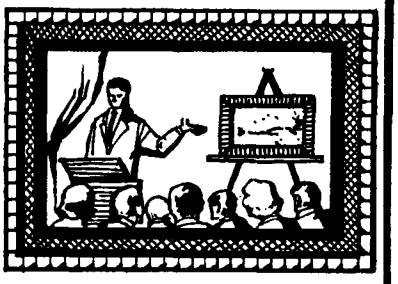

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A Reply from the Ripon Society

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though there is much that begs for criticism in Andrew Hacker's article ("Is There a New Republican Majority?," November 1969), I want to confine myself here to two points that touch on the Ripon Society.

1) COMMENTARY should acknowledge the factual error of statements by Mr. Hacker which are damaging to the Ripon Society. He writes: "Though the Society sends its releases to a large mailing list, it seems to carry on without meetings or members. I have reason to believe that Nelson Rockefeller mails them a five-figure check every so often, an amount sufficient for his and their purposes. *The Lessons of Victory*, put together by 17 young men on the Ripon payroll. . . ." etc.

Each one of these statements is in error. The facts are these. Though the Ripon Society and Dial Press publishers did send a free press release on *The Lessons of Victory* to a list of eminent American political scientists (Andrew Hacker included), the Society's normal mailing list is made up of some 2700 paid subscribers to its monthly magazine, the Ripon *Forum* (Mr. Hacker not yet included). Several hundred of these subscribers also pay dues to chapters in eleven cities: Boston, Cambridge, Chicago, Dallas, Hartford, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. Prospective chapters in a number of other cities know that before chartering a new group the Ripon Society insists that it present a well-researched position paper on an issue of public policy, that it show some potential for raising funds locally, and that it include political activists among its members. Chapters do indeed hold meetings, work for candidates, participate in local civic and urban development activities, and even write books.

The Lessons of Victory, edited by Ripon's former research director, Robert D. Behn, is an example of such a book, the Society's seventh in the six years of its existence. Its seventeen principal authors were not on a "payroll"; they worked gratis and used as raw data local political reports and clippings contributed by more than 100 Ripon correspondents around the country. These correspondents are among the Society's more than 500 National Associate Members, who, though they do not live in cities with a Ripon chapter, pay additional dues to the national office in Cambridge so that their resumés can be kept on tap for volunteer work.

Because most of the Society's work is done by committed and enthusiastic young people, its budget has never had to be large. It publishes a frank statement of its financial condition annually. Two-thirds of its income is derived from its publications, contract research for officeholders, and small contributions of $100 or less. The remainder is made up of contributions from some one hundred men, including members of Mr. Nixon's cabinet, who support the Society despite their occasional disagreements with it. Support of Ripon demands some tolerance for criticism of oneself, for controversial young ideas, and some willingness to cast one's bread upon the waters. Nelson Rockefeller and the various intermediaries who distribute political contributions in his interests have not consistently been in this frame of mind, and hence they have not been a mainstay of the Ripon Society over the years.

The Society has never received a "five-figure" contribution (unless one includes the cents after the decimal point) from anyone, and indeed it has taken some care to make certain that its sources of funding are widely enough spread to assure its intellectual and political independence. This has enabled it to issue lengthy critiques of China, Vietnam, and ABM policy; to pioneer a decentralizing strategy for government; and to provide critical commentary of party affairs. The canard about Rockefeller support, as well as that about Ripon's affluence and absence of membership, has been committed to print in a number of right-wing publications, which have been anxious to discredit Ripon's steady growth within the Republican party. COMMENTARY is the first national publication with any claim to intellectual respectability to have repeated this erroneous charge. . . . Mr. Hacker simply has his facts wrong.

I know how difficult it must be for a busy scholar to keep up with the growth of new political groups, especially those which do not proselytize for undergraduate membership in his university, but Mr.

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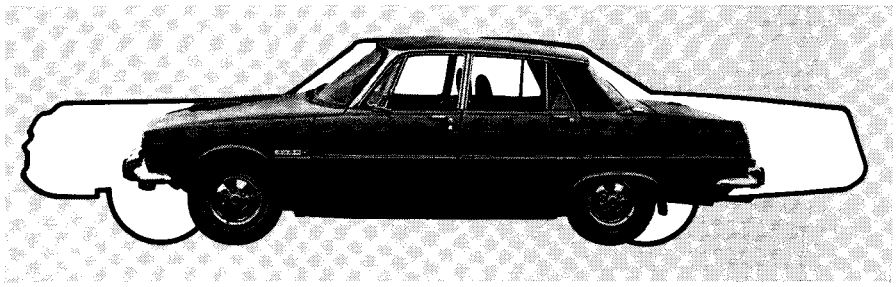

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Hacker does teach at Cornell, whose library maintains special archives on the Ripon Society, with all public materials and private correspondence since its founding in 1963. And Mr. Hacker himself cites the book (*The Republican Establishment*, by Stephen Hess and David Broder) which contains the most accurate account of Ripon's perennial struggle to raise its budget. . . .

2) Mr. Hacker states that "the Ripon-Rockefeller notion that the GOP can gain black votes emerges as political science-fiction: even when the party could find a James Farmer to run under its banner, he got only 27 per cent of the vote in Bedford-Stuyvesant."

This is a pointless example. Farmer was running against Shirley Chisholm, a black woman with strong local ties in a machine-dominated Democratic district in which Farmer was an "outsider." In other areas the situation is different. The following Republicans have made significant inroads into the black vote: Spiro T. Agnew (for Governor of Maryland), Winthrop Rockefeller (Arkansas), Howard Baker, Jr. (Tennessee), Charles Percy (Illinois), Jack Danforth (Attorney General, Missouri), Linwood Holton (Virginia), John V. Lindsay (New York), Edward Brooke and John Volpe (Massachusetts), George Romney (Michigan), Art Fletcher (Washington State), John Sears (Boston), Marlow Cook (Kentucky), Charles Mathias (Maryland), Arlen Specter (Philadelphia), William Cowger (Louisville), Hugh Scott (Pennsylvania).

Perhaps what Mr. Hacker meant to say is that Republicans cannot hope to win black votes in one-party, machine-dominated localities. If so, this is the identical point made by the Ripon Society in Chapter 7 of *The Lessons of Victory*. In the immediate future, the Society argued, the GOP would be best advised to solicit the growing number of middle-class Negro votes, instead of trying to break Democratic organizational control of lower-class blacks, who respond to Democratic control over welfare funds and OEO jobs.

But even here we may have been unduly pessimistic. In 1969, three weeks of work by John Marttila, the Republican National Committee's organizer for urban ghettos, delivered 30 to 40 per cent of the vote in solidly Democratic black precincts to Paul Capra, the twenty-nine-year-old officer of the New Haven chapter of the Ripon Society who was the Republican candidate for Mayor. Capra lost by only 1500 votes, but the lesson of his campaign may be generalized: where blacks are numerous enough to take over Democratic city machines, the older ethnic groups will flee to the Republican party (as in Cleveland). Where whites maintain tight control of machines (as in New Haven, New York, Louisville, and Philadelphia), the black vote may be pried loose by Republican candidates.

On a national level, however, without a Brooke, Lindsay, or Percy on the ticket, it will be some time before a Republican Presidential ticket can match the 39 per cent of the non-white vote that went to Eisenhower-Nixon in 1956 or the 32 per cent for Nixon-Lodge in 1960. But here the question is not one of irreversible voting "trends," as Kevin Phillips and Andrew Hacker suggest, but of conscious decisions by the national party and its nominee to write off the black vote in 1964 and 1968.

JOSIAH LEE AUSPITZ
President, The Ripon Society
Cambridge, Massachusetts

MR. HACKER writes:

My source concerning Rockefeller money was a Republican officeholder, someone quite sympathetic to the Ripon persuasion and an informant I have always found reliable. If he was wrong, and I was misled, then I should of course retract my remark. Just to make sure, however, I asked the Society for a recent list of their benefactors. ("We do not disclose the names of our contributors.") Moreover, their "frank statement of financial condition" fails to indicate what proportion of the Ripon budget comes from large donations.

It is certainly true that Ripon stores its records in the Cornell library. What Mr. Auspitz omits to say is that the Society will not permit anyone to peruse these materials unless his name has first been cleared with them. The Cornell archivist asked Mr. Auspitz if I might have access to these files. Permission was refused.

I had also been told that the authors of *The Lessons of Victory* received payments while writing that book. The Society informs me that only the editor was on a salary, while others received expenses. This seems reasonable.

On the question of substance: I explicitly stated in my article that Ripon-type Republicans have been successful at lower political levels. Many of these candidates do appeal to black voters especially when their Democratic opponents try to capitalize on white anxieties. However my chief focus was on national Republican politics; and here there is every indication that the GOP will continue to nominate candidates like Nixon and Agnew. This being so, not many blacks are likely to vote Republican. I realize that the Ripon Society would prefer a Percy-Brooke ticket. Needless to say, this sentiment is not shared by the regulars who attend Republican conventions.

Jews & Christians

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Arthur A. Cohen's article, "The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition" [November 1969], . . . distorts rather than clarifies the recent history of Jewish-Christian relations. Unfortunately, it provides political comfort to those in the Jewish community whose stance toward dialogue is exactly contrary to the position that Arthur Cohen has himself consistently maintained.

As the author recognizes, the concept of a "Judeo-Christian tradition" was invoked shortly before and after World War II in order to confront a Christianity that in denying a shared heritage with Jews had lent its resources to the murder of Jews or had remained passively silent. This effort on the part of Jewish community agencies, including the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was not without merit or success. In fact, those Christians in the Middle East who deny a "Judeo-Christian tradition" are the ones who remain enemies to Jews and Judaism, while those who affirm that tradition are numbered among our friends. . . .

Not paradoxically at all, Christians who regard Judaism "as a religion so distinctly other than Christianity that it should be reckoned merely as one of the non-Christian religions, with a historical significance, of course, in relation to the origins of Christianity but not in any way to be regarded as a necessary participant in the theological dialogue"

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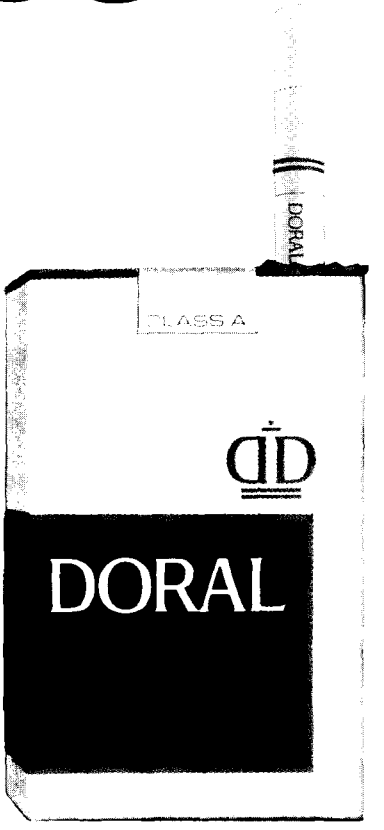

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. . . are joined politically, howbeit without conscious intent, by Jewish theologians who insist that Judaism is so different a religion, so unique a phenomenon, and Jews so insecure, that the theological discussion ought to be prohibited. This position, taken by the Lubavitcher Rabbi and supporters of Orthodoxy's revered Rabbi Soloveitchik, has strengthened and justified the "enemies" of the Jews. Both reactionary Christians and ghettoized Jews have agreed: we have nothing to say to each other; each of us is uniquely superior; confusion or anger is the inevitable consequence of dialogue. But . . . Jewish-Christian understanding, to the degree that it exists at all, has been a product of the dialogue. . . .

Arthur Cohen agrees that we share "affirmations respecting the creation, the covenant of God with His elected people-servant, the revelation of His teaching, and the promise of redemption," but he makes much too light of this. Defining the word "tradition" in his own way, Cohen insists that "Jews and Christians have *conspired* together to promote a tradition of common experience and belief" in an effort to ward off the disaster of secularism. . . . Having participated in countless interreligious exchanges, I can testify that never did Jewish scholars, theologians, or rabbis, nor did the Christian participants, believe or pretend that our archetypal affirmations were without "irrationality, passion, intensity, sharp disagreement, fissure, and the abyss of historical enmity" (Cohen's words). What we did affirm was that there was enough of a shared language and ethical commitment to make dialogue possible. . . .

It is important to realize that a consequence of the polarization within each religious community, resulting from our varying responses to secularism, the new theology, student disorders, and social action, has been to drive certain liberal Jews, Protestants, and Catholics closer to one another than to the traditionalists within their separate ranks. A revolution in updating the "tradition" has created a new, revitalized living Judeo-Christian tradition. . . .

RABBI ARTHUR GILBERT
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MR. COHEN writes:

Arthur Gilbert's letter on my article deflects the thrust of my position but does not blunt it. The issue is not the political advantages of the myth, but its truth. I have no doubt that there are conservative theologians within Christianity and Judaism who so radicalize their intellectual isolation as to undermine any possibility of natural fraternity. This is a misfortune, but as I have indicated in the concluding essay of my book, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition,* the transposition of theological enmity into human animus is a critical distortion against which we must all guard. The question remains, however, whether the substance of my argument is true or false. Rabbi Gilbert does not take on that challenge and remains content with a political rhetoric in which the sole criterion is natural justice and political utility. I have no interest in such manipulative employment of truth.

On "Envy"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to congratulate COMMENTARY on printing Cynthia Ozick's brilliant and perceptive novella, "Envy; or, Yiddish in America" [November 1969]. Since I was particularly struck by the author's sympathy for her characters and their predicament, I was surprised to note the adverse reception of the story in the Yiddish press, where it has been described as a defamation of Yiddish writers, *Yiddishkeit* in general, and as another sample, cut from the cloth of *Portnoy's Complaint,* of the fashionable self-hatred which afflicts American Jewish writers. As one who failed to relish Roth's descant to the fun of self-abuse, I find the comparison particularly irritating in that it reveals a basic misconception of what Miss Ozick has done.

Miss Ozick has this in common with the school of writers of whom Roth is the deftest practitioner. She too has a wonderful ear for the nuances of idiom and a keen eye for mannerisms, but there the resemblance ends. When Portnoy and his tribe are divested of their comical folkways, whose accurate depiction makes the reader chortle, the creatures emerging are generally of an unrelenting vulgarity, alternately weak or rapacious, and unredeemed by any generous impulse or action. The contour of the character may be softened by cheese blintzes, with the correct brand name accurately cited so that the sense of reality is beguiling, but wash away the sour cream and you discover a simplified stereotype under the hilarious caricature.

The critics of Miss Ozick are misled by her marvellous mimicry, the unsparing wit with which she portrays aging Yiddish writers who are consumed by envy of the one who has made it in the Gentile world. You get the picture, warts and all, without prettification. But her characters, despite their outward shabbiness, are never mean; they are humanly understandable. The emotion to which the Yiddish poet is prey is not base; he wants to be known ("fame. . .that last infirmity of noble minds"). At the same time, his personal vanity and his grief for a vanishing world are one. Though suspicious of the purity of his motives—he keeps analyzing his laments—the threnody for something beyond himself is the overriding note. In his most absurd moments he retains a fundamental dignity, for his individual dilemma is part of a deadly serious question—the fate of Yiddish in America, and, by extension, of the Jew in America.

The question can be dismissed with clever jabs at phony rabbis, Hadassah do-gooders, and ostentatious Bar Mitzvahs—the scenario exposing the unrelenting materialism of the Jewish middle class from mamma to neurotic sonny boy is familiar. Equally familiar is the resentment of this monotonous appraisal. Precisely because I share the indignation of those incensed at the willful degradation of "the Jewish image" in much current writing, I feel that distinctions among various kinds of portraiture must be guarded. What matters is not the realism of externals but the inner truth of the life and characters depicted. There is nothing demeaning in the quality of life presented in "Envy." The characters, in addition to appetites, have aspirations and ideas. The Yiddish poet who wants a wider audience has sensibility and talent. Though she calls her story "Envy," the author never ignores the complexity of desire.

No one can read this novella attentively without sensing the richness of what may lie undiscovered. The writer communicates the intense intellectual and moral concerns of the world she describes,

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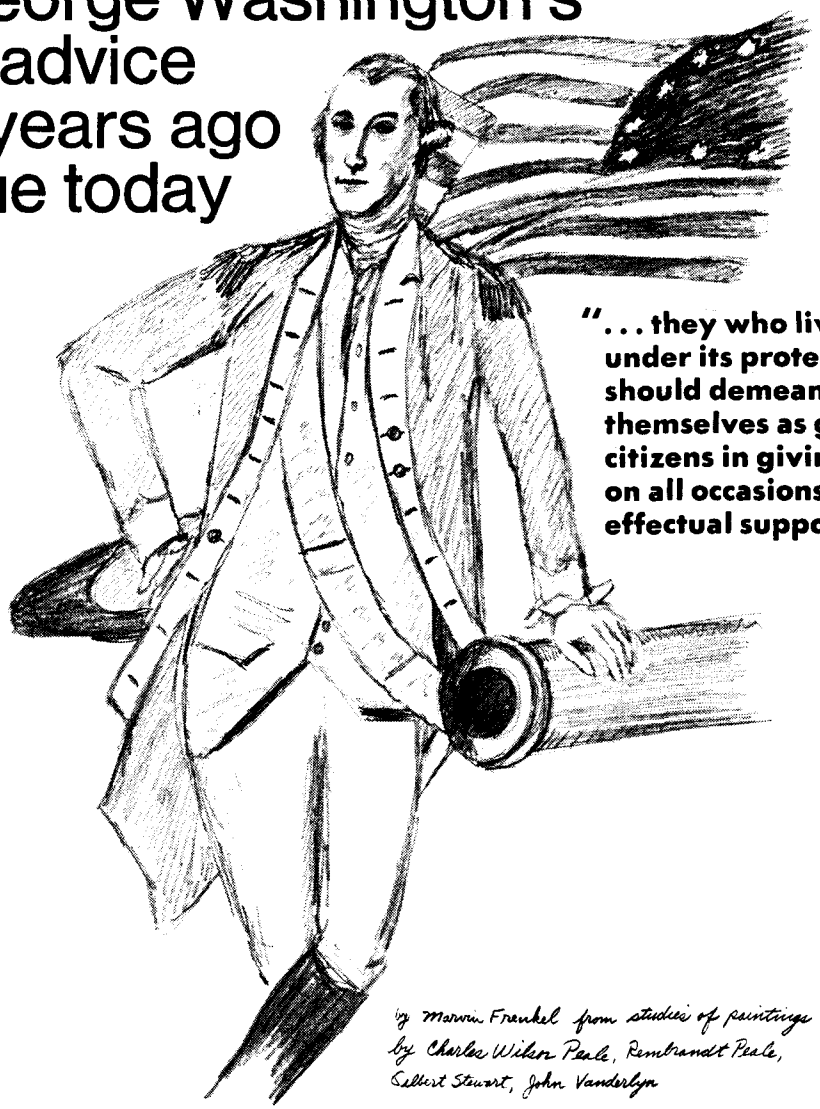

"... they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."

by Marvin Frankel from studies of paintings by Charles Wilson Peale, Rembrandt Peale, Gilbert Stuart, John Vanderlyn

George Washington's Letter to the Providence Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island: August 17, 1790.

"The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy — a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights.

For happily the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction to persecution, no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."

G. Washington

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even when these concerns are voiced in ludicrous confrontations, as in the scene between the poet and the Amercan girl. The absurdity is superficial. Though the poet grovels and the girl is brash, the plea and its rejection are of the substance of tragedy. Because of the author's fundamental tenderness for her characters and respect for the greater problem they illustrate, her comedy is permeated by a deep sense of loss which the reader comes to share.

Finally, Miss Ozick is a superb translator of Yiddish poetry. The Yiddish press should reconsider its target.

MARIE SYRKIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As far as I can remember, the November issue of COMMENTARY was the first ever to begin with a story. The editor must have thought that the subject—the death of Yiddish—was important enough to give Cynthia Ozick's so-called novella, "Envy," the best possible exposure. To use Miss Ozick's vocabulary, the story is "puerile, vicious, pitiable, ignorant, contemptible, above all stupid." Not since the days of Dr. Goebbels have we seen expressed in writing such hatred toward Jews, Yiddish, and Yiddish literature.

The attitude of COMMENTARY toward Yiddish has always been ambivalent—somehow it always treats Hebrew literature respectfully—but it seems that now COMMENTARY has decided to liquidate Yiddish once and for all. Miss Ozick's major character says: "We're all Yiddish writers already dead. Whoever uses Yiddish to keep himself alive is already dead." Well, I am a Yiddish writer and I am alive and I know hundreds of Yiddish writers who don't feel that they are dead but who go on writing and producing valuable Jewish literature.

Of course, no one can deny that Yiddish is in a state of crisis—but it survived the Holocaust, Stalin, and Hitler, and it may outlive even Miss Ozick. Many people, including myself, have written about the decline of Yiddish, but we have written with sympathy and understanding. Miss Ozick gloats shamefully and acts like a vulture. Even in the most self-hating Jewish novels, no one writes as she does. I wonder where this hate comes from? Many Yiddish authors have criticized the real "Mr. Ostrover," whom the reader will recognize immediately, but none has written about him with so much vituperation. I don't think it is "Edelshtein" who is envious of Mr. Ostrover: it is Miss Ozick who is herself consumed with envy.

No doubt there are Yiddish writers who are jealous of Ostrover and it is indeed likely that they are looking for translators. Maybe some writers even asked Miss Ozick to translate their works; but to generalize so blatantly constitutes a venomous personal attack and is false artistically. . . . I have met and spoken with hundreds of Yiddish writers in the U.S., in Western Europe, and in Israel. While some expressed an interest in having their works translated, a great many spoke about the importance of translating foreign works into Yiddish, and many did precisely that.

One can also understand why authors who write for a limited audience would like a larger audience and are thus interested in having their works translated. At the PEN Congress in New York three years ago, I met many writers—Estonian, Finnish, Latvian—who expressed a desire to have their work translated into foreign languages. In Amsterdam I met Dutch writers who write in English because they want a larger audience. Now one can look upon such wishes with approbation or dismay, but Miss Ozick writes with such bitterness as to make her own work contemptible.

In the Soviet Union there are now about 120 Yiddish writers. Their works are translated and published regularly in the major languages of the USSR—Russian, Ukrainian, Bielorussian, etc., but only a few are published in the original Yiddish. These writers are forced to accept this condition, but they have expressed a veiled wish —the only kind possible in Russia— to see their works published in the original. Aaron Vergelis, editor of the Moscow Yiddish monthly *Sovietish Heimland,* which is a journal of quality, and not a "filthy propaganda" publication (Miss Ozick's words), had a volume of his poems published recently in Yiddish in New York. Others try to publish their works in the original in Tel Aviv, Bucharest, and Paris. The efforts are far more characteristic of Yiddish writers than Edelshtein's desperate striving for English-language publication. . . .

ELIAS SCHULMAN
Der Wecker
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The story by Cynthia Ozick displays a sensitivity to the dynamics of the relationship between the psychological and its cultural manifestation (identity and ideology) and a knowledge of Yiddish literature, its values and its writers, that is breathtaking. Perhaps not since the Canadian writer A.M. Klein has such talent been unleashed in the field of Anglo-Jewish literature. . . .

JULIUS WEINBERG
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I may be extravagant, but Cynthia Ozick's story is the best thing that's happened since Malamud. I didn't know whether to weep or laugh—and ended up doing both!

SAM BLUEFARB
Los Angeles Harbor College
Wilmington, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After I finished reading Cynthia Ozick's story . . . I felt ashamed . . . that I was so unfamiliar with Yiddish and "old" Judaism. . . . I am part of that vast group of second-generation, American Jews who got a watered-down Judaism . . . from their parents . . . and have rejected even that. . . .

So what do you do with a whole generation of young men like me? To fill the cultural void some want to overthrow the government, others want a "new culture," and some become technocrats, thinking only of money. . . . To belong to a country is to belong to a cultural *Gestalt,* a pattern, but we young Jews, we have no pattern, nothing to link up with, no "usable past," no "progressive present," nothing except a sense of what we are not. Would it be too presumptuous then to say that Edelshtein's final wish (curse) has come true? . . .

E. J. LUDWIG
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Correction

Henriette Boas was incorrectly identified (Books in Review, January 1970) as teaching classical theology at the University of Amsterdam. Dr. Boas teaches classical philology at a school near Amsterdam, and is the Dutch correspondent for several Israeli newspapers.

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Innocence Restaged

Jack Richardson

AH, INNOCENCE! What would we Americans have for a subject without it? What could we claim as the spine of our literary history if we didn't have, as a ubiquitous protagonist, an innocence which we can send abroad or dedicate an age to; an innocence we can never go home to again; an innocence that, in our minds, we can summon forth perpetually to be soiled and beaten down by the crudities of experience; but an innocence, finally, which will never be completely obliterated from our memory. Whatever the rough facts of existence teach us about our frailties of being, we still cling to the recollection that it was not always so, that we have not been predestined for the dull, grinding, self-centered agonies of our daily selves; but, rather, in the history of our consciousness, we once had a clear vision of joy and beauty that we have only sold or misplaced in the scramble to build a society. On a popular level, this has meant that many of our whores anonymously send their unseen children to the best colleges, that our murderers risk police bullets in order to see their bedridden mothers once more before they die, that our besotted journalists of mayhem and scandal keep, tucked deeply away in their desk drawer, a half-finished, lyric novel about their childhood. We may smile at these types, but we never completely disown them because, as gross as they are, they somehow create and reenact for us our pageant of original purity, a drama of clear definitions that tells us that although we are misguided and lost, we are not irremediably tragic. And so, in the more complex expressions of our culture, we keep to the notion of the synonymy of innocence and life—not, to be sure, the hard, perverted, artificially categorized life of society, but life as a direct, invigorating force that is perceived only by instinct and unalloyed wonder. The life on the Mississippi to Huck; the life of upper-class beauty to Gatsby—what can be said about these conceptions of the world except that they were created by a sort of phenomenological purity, a way of seeing that must finally collide with, battle, and be bloodied by a more scientific theory of knowledge? However, in its struggle to preserve itself, innocence can be a formidable force indeed. It can add solid fiber to the sentimental; it can rejuvenate the oldest and most fatigued passions; and it can even, for a time, shame a subtle and cynical body of experience into a concord of silence so that it allows lovers, heroes, clowns, and people of great hearts and expectations to have their moments on the stage unchallenged. However, there is one thing that innocence, by definition, cannot do: it cannot feign. As soon as we feel that some calculation, some artful choice has gone into its presentation, we are entitled to cry fraud, to haul out sophisticated pejoratives, and to prefer our exhausting and often stultifying complexities to the arrogance of one who hopes to curry favor by concocting what he thinks we want in the way of hope, a new start, or a fresh dramatic guilelessness.

Now, of course, the mood these days is even more receptive than usual to the innocent. In politics, the arts, and social custom, a certain fundamentalism pervades which seeks to put trust back into the immediate, the direct, the spontaneous, and the simple. There is around us the feeling that life has been unduly analyzed and complicated, that much of what passes for knowledge and professionalism is simply useless, neurotic clutter that suffocates the fine, pristine instincts of the individual. "Beauty," "love," "truth"—words which, for a long time, seemed destined only to be used in the ironic mode, have reemerged in our culture with bald, unembarrassed directness to create again a language of idealism, an idiom that saves itself from absurdity only because it is informed with a historical and psychological innocence so earnest and inclusive that one wonders if we perhaps could start all over again and recapture a little ancient enthusiasm about ourselves and our future.

THIS IS all preamble to the discussion of three interesting examples of innocence that have appeared on the New York stage this season. They are revivals, restagings of American plays that grace almost all anthologies of our national drama, works which issued from and confounded the Broadway theater of their time by using structures and theatrical moods that conformed neither to the comfortable rules of naturalism nor to the slick antics of melodrama. William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life*, Tennessee Williams's *Camino Real*, and Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* are all, judged by the standards contemporary with their debuts, mavericks. Each created problems and confusions by playing with the accepted distance and decorum that were supposed to exist between the audience and the stage, each possessed an idiosyncratic notion of narrative and dramatic relevancy, and each attempted to make us aware of that old innocence and wonder in life before it is too late, before we reach the graveyard of Wilder's Grover's Corners, or before we have tarried too long on the "real" as opposed to the

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"royal" way of Williams's *Camino*, or before we lose our faith in the boozy recollections and boasts of glory in Nick's Pacific Street saloon where *The Time of Your Life* runs its course. Not surprisingly, each of the plays fastens onto a very American symbol to bind all its fragments of life together: the saloon; the rural, *Saturday Evening Post* town of porches, main streets, and lifetime neighbors; Kilroy, the proper noun of American wandering and conquest during World War II—they are all very much national proclamations of our uniqueness and our near contradictory oneiric quest both for adventure and roots, experience and the joys of ingenuousness.

A good deal of time has passed since these plays first appeared—*Our Town* in 1938, *The Time of Your Life* in 1939, and *Camino Real* in 1953—and their stylistic peculiarities now seem quite mild-mannered and cautious compared with what has come out of the Theater of the Absurd, the Theater of Cruelty, Total Theater, and all the other momentary theoretical justifications for critical categories. It is much easier today to see their substance, and to assess both the dangers and strengths in this cultural tradition of innocence as a goal and a memory.

The danger lies in a work like *Our Town*, a work which sets out to beguile us with our innocence but which never comes closer than a Madison Avenue Americana shop to the heart of this quality. Grover's Corners, that little piece of national whimsy tucked somewhere away in New Hampshire, is so manifestly a labored fabrication, a dramatic set-up for Wilder's secondhand notions of time, death, and the universe that one can only feel a glaring and laughable incongruity when they collide, as though Walter Pater had spent an evening delivering a solemn lecture on the faults and virtues of a Norman Rockwell magazine cover. It is no wonder that to move the play along through the rhythms of life, Wilder had to come up with the obtrusive and omnipotent character of the stage manager, the homespun *raisonneur* who continually reminds us that the banality we're witnessing has links with ourselves and greater forces of existence; and it is no wonder, too, that we never believe him, never, for all his references to folks, hitching posts, graveyards, and churches feel that anything is being called to mind except a device, an embellished exhortation to put the events on stage on a level of significance that they could never reach unattended. I have said that innocence cannot feign, and *Our Town* is a perfect embodiment of what can happen when innocence is used simply as an assumption, an obligatory signal for our nostalgia and good feelings. It is not just that one feels that the world of Grover's Corners has no passion or reality to it, it is also that one is more than a little outraged at the presumption that, having given us this spurious version of our past, Wilder, at the end of his play, has the bad grace to pity it for not being more intense, for not seizing more of life while it had the chance, for not having both a Pascalian wonder at the infinities of life and a Rabelaisian gusto for each of its moments, moments which, the stage manager reminds us after each intermission, have, in clumps of years, vanished into oblivion. One can only agree with Wilder's conclusions about the people of Grover's Corners, but one is aware that it was his bad art that got them into their sweet, benighted state in the first place. Wilder wants an awed recognition and value for the small acts of life, acts which he is continually threatening with cosmic extinction, but he makes no real, dramatic case for the specialness he seeks to find in them, and at the end of his work one feels that he has presented his audience with an illustrated, perfunctory lecture on how to get more out of its pleasant but ordinary existence. As a member of that audience, I could only answer him that neither I nor anyone else has ever been *that* ordinary, and that innocence, even in small-town America, was never *that* stultifyingly pleasant.

Tennessee Williams fares better as a celebrant of the fragility of human time and the tenderness of those innocents who try to use it with love and wonder in spite of the dispiriting lessons taught to them by those who officiate over and extol an unimaginative reality. It is certainly true that, in many ways, *Camino Real* is an impossible play: it is infused with lumps of simpleminded symbols; it appropriates historical and fictional characters in such a superficial, vulgarized way that Byron, Casanova, and the Baron de Charlus all become varieties of the same whining, Edwardian aesthete; and, finally, it is puffed with that vague, billowy language which those who know nothing about dramatic prose are happy to call poetry. Don Quixote, of the Broadway "impossible dream" variety, is also on hand to begin the play and to give it one of the most egregious examples of a coerced happy ending that I can remember in the theater. Still, Williams does pull a play together by the last moments of the evening, a play which, in a self-righteous fever, jogs us into an acceptance of the most uncomplicated notions of art, love, and the sad miracle of living. The intensity with which Williams manages to scamper up and down these mountains of sentiment, to mine humor, and, in his lyrical, shotgun style, some eloquence from their slopes, makes one finally agree to see things his way, to accept lines like "the violets are breaking through the rocks on the mountains," and to see the world mapped out as a simple battle between the poetic spirit and the police state.

Camino Real is a very direct appeal also for Americans to own up to their desire for innocence, to discover how much good sentiment they really have beneath their sheaths of pragmatic hardness. Kilroy, the tough, American knockabout, shows, in his affinity for Camille, Casanova, and other fragile ladies and gentlemen from Williams's romantic stable, a delicacy of feeling and an exuberance for life in its sensitive forms that surpasses even the most outlandish proletarian literature of the 30's. It is as if, in this play, Williams wished to give Stanley Kowalski another chance, a moment of reconciliation with the antecedents of Blanche Dubois in which he could reveal, after all, that he really does have a heart "as large as a baby's

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SIMCHAS

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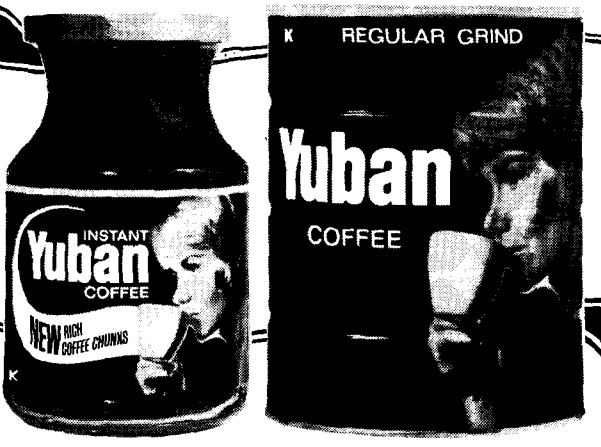

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head" and he is only frightened that any extremes of love will produce a massive, coronary effusion. In the bleak, impoverished Mexican town of Williams's imagination, Kilroy finds himself, along with others who wish to live and feel intensely, dodging death and authority in order to keep his species of dignity intact and his personal hope from being clinically assassinated. It is a sort of odd alliance between the American dream of possibility and freedom and an older world's elegant but melancholy romanticism; and an understanding comes to exist between the two that both are investing life with all the passions at their command, that both are forms of innocence which are threatened by uniforms and the mercantile ethic, that both can never be degraded to such a degree that old dreams and graceful visions can be bullied out of them by the lethal practicalities of age, destitution, or death itself.

IF CAMINO REAL finally makes a hard bargain with the intellect for its acceptance, *The Time of Your Life* simply renders it *hors de combat* by its unabashed explosion of sentiment. Saroyan's innocence is simply impregnable, and because he trusts it, because he does not make little winking *sotto voce* apologies to his audience on its behalf or festoon it with literary symbols, it has stood by him through the years; it has kept his play from becoming merely a curio and has made it into a small, but sturdy, American classic. In this work, Saroyan puts all his enthusiasm for life into the sanctuary of a San Francisco bar—that is, into our country's traditional refuge from the assaults of workaday, petty actuality. Characters drop in and out with the apparent randomness of any group of saloon visitors, announcing themselves, their philosophies, and their problems; but in Saroyan's perfect bar they are at last listened to, and more, they discover that a propitious moral imperative exists in Nick's Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant, and Entertainment Palace—namely, that the most broken-down piece of human circumstance will have a chance, indeed *must* have a chance if anything else in the world is to have human meaning.

It was not a good time for America when this play was written—we were just coming out of a depression, a world war was drifting toward us—and yet, unlike many of his contemporaries, Saroyan never fastened onto hysterical simplicities, never lost sight of what was important in the national life and the life of a writer's imagination. It is remarkable that although there is no mistaking the historical facts threaded through the play, there is so little of the time's facile styles present. Saroyan's humor and language make of particular American crises delightful dilemmas for all humanity simply because, like his central character, Joe, he takes nothing for granted and scrutinizes everything without prejudgment or artistic condescension. A two-dollar whore with a tender heart? A policeman yearning for beauty and tranquility? An intellectual longshoreman? A melodramatic blackguard from the vice squad? A hoofer who does comic routines about the dangers of *Realpolitik*? It would take a steel-like innocence not to have just a moment or two of sport at their expense, but Saroyan never falters. He gives them his complete artistic fealty and writes them deeply into our consciousness, as if they were the first and freshest objectifications of a deep, half-articulate myth about ourselves.

It is odd that *The Time of Your Life,* a play strung together by a gentle insistence on the goodness and possibilities of life, should end with a killing, but the way it has been arranged, it is really no more than American nostalgia having a glorious moment, a victory of the best notion of our history over the worst. Kit Carson, a garrulous old frontiersman with a dubious reminiscence to pay for each of the drinks that he can cadge, suddenly covers all his tall tales with the swagger of truth by doing in the play's villain, Blick, the detective from the vice squad who has gratuitously persecuted and humiliated the sweet prostitute, Kitty Duval. The play ends with his recounting this deed in the same pitchman's style as he has his other tales, giving our legend a second chance, and reminding us that high adventure and the innocent spirit need not be nothing more than sentimental bombast, that, in fact, they might be the most significant weapons we have still left to us.

I HAVE NO idea whether or not we are due for a recrudescence of interest in Saroyan's work, but I don't see how a generation that wants to revive old hopes about this country and the way to live in it could overlook such an ally. It would have to search very hard to find an artist skillful enough to make one believe that not only is it possible for evil and innocence to have a shoot-out in a significant work of art, but that it is even possible for innocence to win. And it might also learn from him what I did from seeing, on consecutive evenings, his and Williams's and Wilder's plays: namely, that in art, innocence, like despair, cannot be undigested or unearned.

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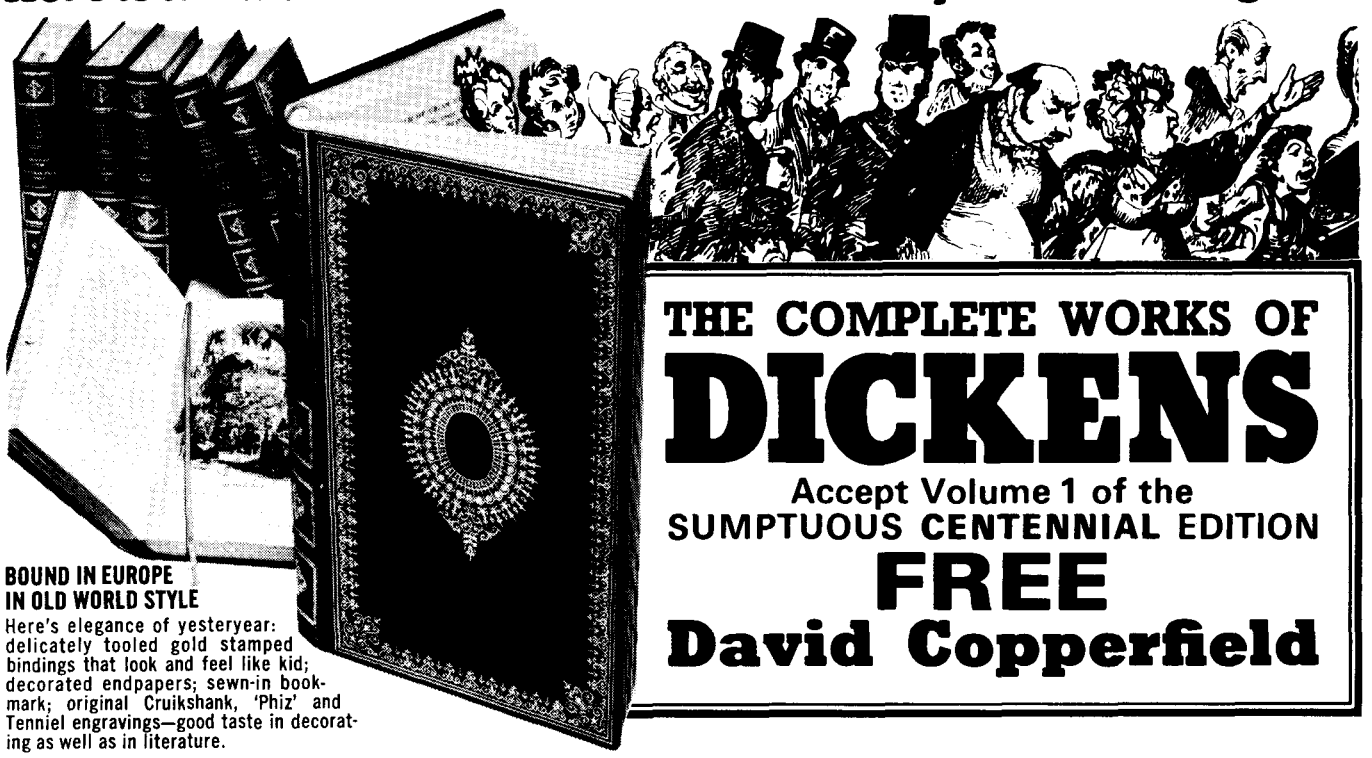

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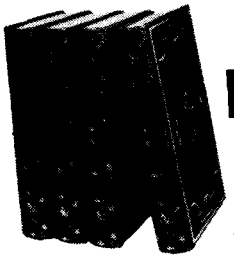

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Nixon So Far

Maurice J. Goldbloom

LIKE FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, Richard Nixon came to the Presidency in the midst of a national crisis which had seriously eroded the authority of the office, and indeed of the government itself. Neither in 1933 nor in 1969, to be sure, was revolution in the cards—though in both years there were some on the Left paranoid enough to hope, and some on the Right paranoid enough to fear, that it was. But in both years the gulf between Washington and the nation was wide enough to produce an almost universal sense of frustration and a widespread disillusionment with the democratic process.

Like Roosevelt, too, Nixon did not win office on any surge of popular adulation. (The idolatry which later surrounded Roosevelt had, in 1932, not shown itself; he received the votes of 57 per cent of the electorate—roughly the same proportion as had voted for Herbert Hoover four years earlier—less because he had won their hearts than because, in the depths of the depression, they figured that almost any change would be for the better.) Most of those whose ballots gave Nixon a margin of victory almost as narrow as the margin of his defeat eight years earlier were motivated primarily by fear of George Wallace and distaste for Hubert Humphrey (or perhaps one should say, for Lyndon Johnson's Vice President); Nixon never was greeted by frenetic crowds such as had always surrounded the Kennedys.

To come to the Presidency under such circumstances is, in one sense, an extraordinarily difficult thing. In 1932, the depression posed a challenge to which nothing in the country's experience suggested an adequate answer. In 1969, the challenge was Vietnam; it seemed almost impossible to continue the war successfully (even if one were sure what one meant by "success") and not much easier to end it on an acceptable basis (even if one knew what one meant by *that*). Closely tied to Vietnam was the problem of inflation, which was eroding the purchasing power not only of the aged and others living on fixed incomes, but even of the great mass of workers, whose take-home pay was rising less rapidly than their cost of living; only some fortunate stockholders, corporate executives, and a few groups in especially favored positions were still keeping ahead of the game. And the pressing and complex problems of poverty and race relations—neither of them exactly new, but both presenting themselves in new forms, both substantively and politically—complicated everything else. Nor were events in other parts of the world tranquilly awaiting the settlement of the Vietnam war; the Middle East, Latin America, and Greece were only three of the more explosive areas in which the Nixon administration inherited urgent and difficult problems.

At the same time, however, a President who takes power in a time of crisis and political disillusion possesses certain important initial advantages. People have, by and large, given up hope of really satisfactory solutions; consequently, any headway he is able to make is so much to the good. (Roosevelt won the overwhelming acclaim of the American people not by ending the depression—it took Adolf Hitler to do that in 1940—but by ameliorating its consequences.) This public tolerance has its limits, of course; Mr. Nixon will eventually have to end the Vietnam war or face the same sort of public reaction that drove Lyndon Johnson from the White House. But so far, at least, most of the American people seem ready to take a reduction in the level of fighting as a substitute for peace, and a gradual return of American troops as an adequate down payment on eventual disengagement.

For a substantial minority of Americans, of course, such halfway measures are even now not sufficient, as was evidenced by the massing of hundreds of thousands in Washington on November 15, *after* Nixon's address to the nation. It is probably also true that the administration's anti-war critics are much more passionate about the Vietnam issue in general than are those people who represent the President's approving majority in the public opinion polls. But it is also fairly clear that even the former are, in large part, less intense in their opposition to Nixon's war than they were to Johnson's. They still seek to influence this administration—a goal in which they can claim some success despite the Pres-

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM, a veteran contributor to these pages, is the author of *American Security and Freedom* and of numerous articles on foreign policy and civil liberties. Mr. Goldbloom's last previous article, "Is There a Backlash Vote?" appeared in August 1969.

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ident's reiteration that he will not be swayed by demonstrations—rather than to destroy it.

Thus far, then, the Nixon administration has been able to postpone a decision on Vietnam. But the tolerance it has won is based less on what has so far been accomplished than on the promise of at least a rapid and continuous further de-escalation of the American role in the Vietnam war, and perhaps a phasing out of that war itself. The withdrawal of a fifth of the American forces in Vietnam is not by itself enough to remove the causes of discontent; this country still has more troops in Vietnam than when the domestic reaction to our role there first reached massive proportions. Though the casualty rate is only a fraction of what it was a year ago, more dead are still being added to what most Americans already regard as an intolerable number. More American soldiers have died in Vietnam than in Korea, and almost four fifths as many as in World War I.

Hence, the President's continued hold on popular support for his policies in Vietnam will depend on his ability to withdraw troops at an increasingly rapid rate, for as more troops are withdrawn, there will be greater pressure to bring home the rest—there exists no acceptable static level either of forces or of casualties. But the success of this type of withdrawal depends in turn on the establishment of a satisfactory *political*, and not merely military, basis for peace in South Vietnam. The weakness of the Nixon policy so far (and hence its potential for future disaster), is that no progress has yet been made toward such a political solution, either in the Paris negotiations or in South Vietnam itself. The latter failure is the more fundamental one since it is a major contributory cause of the Paris stalemate. Thus, the dispute over the shape of the table was not a superficial one, though it was superficially "solved"; it was a dispute over who the proper interlocutors were, and on what terms they should negotiate. For the United States, the Thieu-Ky regime is "the legitimate government of South Vietnam," and its only legitimate opposite number is the government of North Vietnam. But the Communists, North and South, will negotiate only with us; for them the Saigon government has no more legitimacy than the puppet regimes installed by the Nazis in the countries they occupied during World War II.

At the same time, the U.S. maintains the fiction that the only enemy with whom *we* are at war and will negotiate is North Vietnam; we have consistently rejected any bilateral discussions with the National Liberation Front. (Indeed, it was to give substance to this fiction that President Johnson originally ordered the bombing of North Vietnam; before that, it was only too obvious, even according to State Department figures, that we were fighting Southerners.) And we also refuse to enter into negotiations on the one question which for the Communists is central —the composition of the South Vietnamese government. On this point, the Thieu regime is no more willing to negotiate than we are, though the importance of this fact is diminished by the unwillingness of the Communists to consider the Thieu government an appropriate negotiating partner. Instead, we talk about "free elections" *after* a peace settlement based on the recognition of the Saigon regime's authority—including the authority to continue persecuting its opponents.

Thus the United States continues to run a unique marionette show, in which the puppets pull the strings. The continued withdrawal of American troops and the failure to make any progress toward a political solution cannot long coexist without creating a new crisis. The perpetuation of the Thieu regime depends on the presence of American troops—a fact which has led Thieu himself to reject in his public statements Washington's goals of withdrawal. With good reason, President Thieu has no confidence in his ability to win popular support and turn it into military effectiveness of the sort required to maintain his regime if the Americans should leave.

President Nixon may indeed have almost exhausted the possibility of further withdrawals along presently constituted lines; for beyond a certain and probably not distant point, such withdrawals will have serious political consequences. Moreover, there is reason to believe that those which have already taken place have proceeded smoothly only because the NLF has deliberately reduced the level of its own military activity—whether to promote a political settlement or simply to postpone any confrontation until more American troops have left, it is hard to say. But unless real progress is made in negotiations, it would seem unwise to count on the Communists for indefinite restraint, particularly in the face of such provocations as the systematic murder and torture of their suspected supporters under "Operation Phoenix." One way or another, the Nixon administration will have to move toward a political settlement of the war or it will face disaster both in Vietnam and at home.

MEANWHILE, however, the Vietnam de-escalation has contributed to the beginning of a détente in American relations with the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, with China. So far the specific accomplishments in this area have not been too impressive. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks were begun and have continued in an atmosphere of cordiality, but they have achieved nothing of substance. Neither Americans nor Russians have as yet offered any major proposals. The Nixon administration's one notable step in arms limitation was taken unilaterally, and had no reference to the SALT talks. In renouncing the use of bacterial weapons under any conditions, ordering the cessation of research on them, and promising not to

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be the first to use chemical warfare, President Nixon was reacting to a sharp rise in popular fear and resentment of biochemical weapons in the American arsenal both at home and in allied countries. That apprehension had been triggered by such incidents as the killing of large numbers of sheep by nerve gas that had escaped from a testing range, an accident involving gas on Okinawa, and the discovery that large quantities of deadly gases were frequently being shipped through populous centers of this country under conditions which made a major catastrophe quite possible. Many of these facts had been brought to light by the efforts of Representative Richard McCarthy of New York, despite the attempt of the Pentagon to conceal them under a cloak of official secrecy. To be sure, the weapons which the President renounced were already outlawed by international law, but we had hitherto claimed that we needed to develop them in order to be able to retaliate if others used them first. Unfortunately, the effect of the President's pledge was marred by the refusal of the United States to include tear and other irritant gases and defoliants among the chemical weapons it was renouncing, despite a vote of the UN General Assembly declaring that these weapons were subject to the ban of the Geneva Convention. And the Pentagon is still trying to preserve its stockpile of biological toxins, including some of very great lethal potency, from the destruction of the bacterial cultures that produced them. It is, indeed, even continuing to bring over officers from such countries as South Vietnam, Thailand, Greece, and South Korea for training in chemical and biological warfare.

While the diplomats talk around the issue, preparations for the installation of anti-ballistic missiles and the testing of MIRV's threaten to add a new dimension to the nuclear arms race. The President now proposes to expand substantially the ABM program, despite the fact that the administration won Senate authorization for the present, limited program by the slimmest of margins. Like the Paris negotiations on Vietnam, the SALT talks give the impression of avoiding essentials while preserving the hope of progress; one suspects that at least some of the negotiators on both sides are happy enough to leave it that way. The difference is that whereas in Paris this sort of foot-shuffling at least makes matters no worse than they were, the continued labors of technicians in both the U.S. and the USSR make every day's delay in the SALT talks a source of escalated menace.

YET, IF THE arms limitation talks still offer nothing substantive where substance is vitally needed, they nevertheless represent one aspect of a détente. Another is the relaxation of tensions across the borders between Eastern and Western Europe—most strikingly apparent in the economic and political rapprochement between West Germany and most of the countries of the Soviet sphere, including the USSR itself. This is certainly not a development which found its origin in Washington, but it is one on which Washington has learned to smile. The chances now seem good for a European security conference in the near future; such a conference may succeed in giving the existing détente some concrete form, or it may simply be another fencing match—polite, as in Helsinki and Vienna, or impolite, as in Paris.

The relations between the United States and the Soviet Union have, of course, gone through many cycles of tension and détente in the course of the last twenty years. This country's relations with China, on the other hand, have been confined to a range extending from uncompromising hostility to open warfare. Not that there have not been agreements, of a sort; the important ones have been those which ended a military confrontation, as in Korea, or averted one, as in Laos in 1960. But in neither case did these agreements involve any fundamental meeting of minds; Laos remains a theater of war—not, however, as a result of any *Chinese* intervention there—and Korea an area of tension bordering on war. Besides such formal agreements there have been tacit ones, such as the *modus vivendi* on the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu arrived at under the Eisenhower administration. And there have been the hundreds of meetings on the ambassadorial level, first in Switzerland and later in Warsaw, at which practical problems have been dealt with in secret. All this, however, has been merely peripheral; the fundamental relationship has continued to be one of unremitting antagonism.

It is against this background that the Nixon administration's steps toward normalization of relations with China—small as those steps have been, and uncertain as is their future—possess a significance of the first magnitude. For our policy hitherto has been directed overtly at the destruction of the Chinese state; there was no other possible rationale for our absolute ban on even the most trivial economic contacts. Now, although the regulations on trade with China still remain irrationally restrictive—as do those, to a lesser degree, with Eastern Europe, despite the efforts of four Presidents to secure their relaxation—they are no longer the expression of paranoia. Moreover, there is strong reason to believe that the administration intends to move toward a further normalization as soon as it is sure that such a step will not result in political backlash at home. Its first action—the modification of the ban on tourist purchases of Chinese goods—was scarcely more than symbolic. Its second—the removal of the ban on sales of non-strategic goods to China by foreign subsidiaries of American companies—was of real economic importance, and it laid the logical

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groundwork for a similar removal of the ban on shipments from the U.S. itself. Why, after all, should only the *foreign* employees of American companies be able to make a living by working on Chinese orders, and why should American farmers be forced to watch their Canadian and Australian counterparts supply a market which might otherwise be theirs? This is an argument that could look particularly cogent during a recession.

If it is truly the case—and I believe it is—that the administration is seeking to transform the undeclared war with China into the sort of relationship which currently exists with Russia, then the "Nixon doctrine" must be regarded as a key element of this policy. For as the Chinese see things, the United States has long been attempting to surround China with military strongholds, with a view toward eventual attack. Only in Washington has this argument seemed irrational, in the light of the record. The President's declaration that there will be no more Vietnams, and that we will expect Asian nations to take the responsibility for their own defense except against external aggression by a nuclear power, may offer some reassurance to the Chinese—if they choose to believe it. Unfortunately, the Nixon administration's rhetoric has been far from clear or consistent on this point, and its actions have not been such as to resolve the doubts its words have left.

Mr. Nixon's statement that we will "stand proudly with Thailand against those who might threaten it from abroad or from within" aroused lively fears of another Vietnam in the minds of many Americans; it would be surprising if it did not produce a similar reaction in Peking. The same can be said for the Vice President's statement that nothing has changed in our relations with Thailand and that we stand by our commitments to it and other Asian countries; in the recent past these "commitments" have expanded to cover whatever activities an administration saw fit to undertake. Perhaps the Senate's overwhelming vote to bar the use of any funds in the defense-appropriation bill for the deployment of ground troops in Laos or Thailand—and the Nixon administration's *ex post facto* "agreement" with this provision—will afford a somewhat better guarantee that our "commitments" will be more strictly defined. The trouble is, however, that the term "ground troops" may also receive a very narrow construction; the massive infusion of American "civilians" into Laos, accompanied by American weapons, money, and bombs, might seem to the Chinese almost as much of a threat as if the Americans were in uniform. And the secrecy which the administration insists on maintaining in regard to its activities in Laos—it delayed for months in returning an edited transcript of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's secret hearings on the subject—may cause as much suspicion in China as it does here.

THE FAR EAST still poses the most immediately crucial test of the administration's foreign policy. But this is in itself an aspect of the distortion caused by the Vietnam war in this country's relations with the rest of the world. Other areas, themselves of major importance, have been overshadowed by and subordinated to Vietnam. This was true under President Johnson, and it is still true. In most areas American policy is still largely improvised from day to day, with the all too frequent result that it is made by the military. The record here is no worse than under the previous administration; indeed, in some instances it is noticeably better. But it remains bad. Thus, the Nixon administration has expressed disapproval of the Greek dictatorship in much more outspoken terms than the Johnson administration ever did. The partial arms embargo, lifted in October 1968, was reimposed by the new administration as soon as it took office. But in the last few months there have been reports that the administration is about to resume full arms shipments. These reports began to appear at the same time that the Greek regime was being overwhelmingly condemned by the Council of Europe, despite American lobbying to block that action. The resumption of arms shipments would fly in the face of the NATO resolution calling on member nations to cooperate in all legitimate ways to bring pressure on the Greek government for the restoration of democracy.

Elsewhere in the world, except for Western Europe, where the President has managed rather well, the story is substantially the same: the Nixon administration all too often combines enlightened rhetoric with either total inaction or ambivalent support for right-wing regimes. Thus, the administration has so far refused to negotiate a new Panama Canal agreement with the present military government of Panama on the ground that on such fundamental matters it can deal only with a democratically elected government. And, while sending some economic aid, it has eliminated the shipments of tear gas and other riot-control equipment which we had formerly sent to Panama. Both these steps represent an improvement over the attitude of the previous administration toward military regimes. In addition, President Nixon has not, so far, sponsored military coups or attempted coups in any Latin American country, as the Johnson administration did in Brazil, or engaged in military intervention, as in the Dominican Republic.

But this has not prevented the President from continuing to support the increasingly repressive and reactionary military regimes of Brazil and Argentina. One may grant that this comes under the heading of "realism" rather than of political preference; President Nixon has carefully avoided any confrontation with the nationalist military regimes of Bolivia and Peru, despite their seizure of oil wells and refineries operated by

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U.S. companies. But then there was the ill-fated Latin American trip of Nelson Rockefeller, during which the Governor was received with hostile demonstrations in those countries where people were free enough to demonstrate, and—what is worse—with overwhelming cordiality in Paraguay and Haiti, the two most repressive dictatorships in the hemisphere. Worst of all was Rockefeller's subsequent recommendation that the U.S. make no distinction between democratic and dictatorial regimes, while increasing military aid. (Taken literally, the Governor's recommendations would seem to imply the desirability of U.S. economic and military assistance for Fidel Castro!)

In Africa, this administration's policies have been, in most respects, similar to those of all its predecessors; that is, it has done very little, either good or bad, in most of the continent. It has continued to support the existing sanctions against Rhodesia, but to oppose their extension to the countries which have aided Ian Smith in evading them. It has also continued to ship Portugal the arms with which, in defiance of the terms of her agreements, she represses the revolts of her African colonies. The one notable innovation in American policy has been the action of the State Department in protesting South Africa's refusal of visas to members of the U.S. Congress; no previous administration has ever done this. Africa was also affected by U.S. policy on the role of gold in the international monetary system; the two-tier system of pricing gold and the creation of Special Drawing Rights or "paper gold" were U.S.-sponsored devices which combined to block South Africa's attempt to secure an upward revaluation of the metal. While distaste for South Africa (and for the other major beneficiary of a higher gold price, the Soviet Union) may have been one of the factors hardening the American attitude, concern for world currency stability in general and the strength of the dollar in particular was undoubtedly the primary consideration. Here, the Nixon administration's policy was the same as that of the Johnson administration, which originally proposed the creation of Special Drawing Rights.

In the Nigerian civil war the United States was the only major power (except for China, which had no way of intervening), which did not send arms to either side. It was undoubtedly of help to Nigeria that we did not recognize Biafra, and that oil companies and other American business interests continued to invest in areas controlled by the Federal government. But the relief sent from this country to Biafra, non-political though it was, objectively assisted the Easterners.

In respect to that perennially troubled area, the Middle East, this administration has stepped in where not merely angels but Lyndon Johnson himself feared to tread, and has attempted to lay a basis for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations with Britain, France, and above all the Soviet Union.* So far the principal consequence of its efforts appears to be a crop of editorials ranging from disapproval to denunciation in the press of Tel Aviv, Cairo, Damascus, and Moscow. Since the assumptions as to the nature of the American proposals made in one set of editorials contradict those in another, one can only join the New York *Times* in wishing that the administration had seen fit to let the American public see the proposals which it has already made known to the British, French, Russians, Israelis, and Arabs. There are times in international affairs when, in the midst of delicate negotiations, secrecy is necessary. There are other times —this is one of them—when it is not only unnecessary but impossible, and a clear public statement of the facts is required.

THE DOMINANT note of the Nixon administration's foreign policy during its first year has been one of caution—a desire to get out of the trouble we're in and to avoid getting into any more, even at the cost of accepting a diminution of the American role in world affairs. Its few real initiatives—in Vietnam, in the Middle East, and in international monetary policy—have all been responses to immediate crises which it could not avoid facing. In domestic affairs, on the other hand, it has been much readier to depart from established policy, though not so ready as its rhetoric might sometimes lead one to believe.

In his general approach to the economy and specifically to the problem of inflation, President Nixon has simply carried further several policies which had already been initiated by the Johnson administration and the Federal Reserve Board. These policies combine the orthodox Keynesian and pre-Keynesian prescriptions for combating inflation—a budgetary surplus and tight money, and in this case the highest interest rates since the Civil War.† The result has been a halt in the growth of the American economy and the creation of a recession which may be expected to intensify in the course of the next several months; the one thing that government policy can always succeed in achieving, if it is single-minded enough, is economic retrogression. In the mean-

* For a more detailed discussion of present U.S. policy in the Midle East, see Anthony Hartley's "The U.S., the Arabs & Israel," beginning on page 45.—ED.

† The official pretense is that interest rates are set by the market; the demand for capital is high and so they automatically rise. In fact, as anyone with even the slightest knowledge of American economic history knows, interest rates in the United States are set by the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board; the former sets the rate at which government bonds will be offered and the latter intervenes in the market to make sure they can be sold at that rate. Thus the tremendous capital demands of the First and Second World Wars were met at low and stable interest rates; the interest rates on various types of public and private debt today range from two to twenty times what they were in 1945.

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time, however, inflation has not merely not been halted; in the last three years, with interest rates steadily rising, the rate of inflation has more than doubled.

This economic policy is one which the Nixon administration inherited, but which it has applied with a vengeance; it fits in with the policy —advocated by Dr. Arthur Burns in his book, *Prosperity Without Inflation*—that produced the Eisenhower recession of 1958, which was also accompanied by an increased rate of inflation. (Dr. Burns appears to be having second thoughts about the lengths to which the policy has been carried, but it is probably too late to avert a major downturn in the economy, from which the country may take several years to recover fully.) To be sure, we may yet witness a reversal of the trend of prices, but if so, it will be the result of a slump well beyond anything the administration or even the Federal Reserve had in mind or is likely to welcome. The President is reported to be ready to undertake a wide variety of measures, ranging from increased public works to a planned budget deficit, to reverse the process if he sees a real recession at hand. But while measures of this sort stimulate a *rising* economy fairly quickly, they take much longer to revive a failing one, and may not succeed at all unless they are undertaken on a massive scale. Tight money and high interest rates are sure to restrict at least some types of investment, though they are often ineffective against the more speculative forms of economic activity. But the availability of credit at low rates does not necessarily encourage investment in a depressed economy. Besides, no matter how great their liquidity may be, bankers are not anxious to lend except to good credit risks, and in a depression these are not numerous.

The administration's approach to other domestic problems has been conditioned by its restrictive monetary and fiscal policy, as well as by the continued demands of the war. It has not hesitated to offer a variety of new and sometimes imaginative proposals, but it has been unwilling to supply the necessary funds for their enactment. (At the same time, the government has continued to spend huge sums on such items as the ABM and the development of the supersonic transport plane, which are not merely extremely costly but harmful in themselves.) Thus, after letting it be known that the Model Cities program was to be greatly expanded and was to serve as the chosen vehicle for urban aid, the administration has actually cut the program back and frozen funds already appropriated to it. The President has spoken eloquently about the quality of life and has declared that the preservation of our environment must be undertaken "now or never." But he has followed the lead of President Johnson—who could also be more generous with rhetoric than with funds—in asking Congress first for only a fraction of the already inadequate sums authorized for the fight against water pollution, and then proposing a new program to replace the existing one.*

A similar situation has developed in education, where the President has vetoed the appropriation for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare because Congress voted a billion dollars more for education than he wanted to spend. Likewise, the President has talked about the need for a "new approach" to the "health crisis" but his medical budget, aside from the mandatory expenses under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, represents a sharp cutback and has even brought protests from the American Medical Association. The proposed 1971 budget for the National Institutes of Health is, after allowing for the effects of inflation, about 20 per cent lower than the comparable figure for 1969. A small increase is to be noted in the appropriation for aid to medical, nursing, and dental schools—the "health manpower" program which is supposedly the administration's first priority in the health field—but the total will provide for only a small part of the needed expansion of facilities, and no provision has been made for increased aid to students.

One urban program after another has been either phased out or cut back. In some instances, perhaps, the value of these programs is in any case questionable; urban renewal and urban redevelopment have all too often become instruments for subsidizing the rich at the expense of the poor. The new requirement that each housing unit destroyed by such programs be replaced by a new lower- or middle-income unit, is all to the good. But the funds for public housing remain negligible; in this field we still have not caught up with Robert Taft's proposals of two

* There is probably no other form of inflation quite as severe as that which affects the rhetorical dollar. Thus, in his annual message the President announced a five-year $10 billion campaign against water pollution. It now turns out that, in the first place, only $4 billion is to come from the federal government; the states and cities are to supply the rest. In the second place, the $4 billion does not represent appropriations of that amount during the five year period, but annual authorized commitments; one estimate is that the actual expenditures will be spread over nine years—if they are made. For fiscal 1971, the first year of the program, the commitments will be limited to $100 million, actual appropriations to $40 million. This compares with an authorized 1971 appropriation of $1.25 billion under the existing program. Of course, under the present program as well appropriations have far from matched authorizations. For 1969, only $200 million was asked by President Johnson and voted by Congress; for 1970 President Nixon asked approximately the same sum, but Congress almost quadrupled it—though this was still a third below the authorized amount. There is no assurance that the sums projected by President Nixon will actually be appropriated, any more than those authorized under the old law were. Indeed, it has even been suggested that when the sum begins to reach substantial figures, another "bold new program" will be introduced to bring costs down again.

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decades ago. Here, of course, the Nixon administration merely shares the guilt of its predecessors, but the situation has meanwhile become more urgent with each passing year.

Where the expenditure of money has not been at issue, however, the administration has a better record. After some hesitation and shifts of position—consistency has not been a major concern of the President, which is probably fortunate—Mr. Nixon joined with Northern Democrats and the liberal wing of his own party to put through an extension of the anti-poverty program without the crippling amendments which Southern Congressmen and right-wing Republicans wished to attach. Again, propelled by an uprising of miners, the administration sponsored the first reasonably adequate mine-safety bill in American history; a last-minute threat by the President to veto the bill because it provided for federal compensation to victims of "black lung" was withdrawn when it became clear that the veto would produce widespread strikes. The record here is instructive. At every stage, the administration acted in response to direct action by the miners. It originally proposed a bill when thousands of miners walked off their jobs in protest against the conditions under which they worked, then modified it in the face of objections from the mine owners to the expense it would involve, then returned to a strong bill when retreat aroused a storm, then turned against the bill again, and finally approved it.

A similar turnabout marked the President's relationship with his first consumer affairs adviser, the head of the Good Housekeeping Institute. When this lady insisted on continuing her connection with the Institute while serving as the President's adviser, he first supported her in this determination, then had second thoughts and dropped her. In her place he named Mrs. Virginia Knauer, who turned out to be admirably qualified. Unfortunately, Mrs. Knauer's effectiveness has been limited by the fact that her post has no powers and the administration has given consumer protection a very low priority in the allotment of funds. Thus, when President Nixon started budget-cutting, Transportation Secretary Volpe ordered a careful review of "proposed personnel increases, *particularly in the National Highway Safety Bureau.*" The Bureau has a total of twenty-five people testing automobiles for compliance with safety standards; it is reported to have a four-year backlog of work.

ONE FIELD in which the administration has been unexpectedly active is trust-busting, although it has not used the threat of anti-trust action to deter price rises, as its predecessors sometimes did. Instead, it has concentrated on expanding the scope of anti-trust law by launching a major attack on conglomerate mergers. In so doing it has developed further a legal concept which had begun to appear under the Eisenhower administration: that a merger is prohibited if it forecloses the possibility that one of the partners will *become* a competitor of the other, in a field where competition is inadequate. The administration has also based its opposition on the argument that conglomerate mergers restrict competition by increasing the likelihood of reciprocal dealing among the parts of the conglomerate. (This is an extension of the argument on the basis of which the government forced DuPont to divest itself of its interest in General Motors.) In taking this position, the administration may be giving expression to that Populist distrust of bigness which has never been altogether absent from Republican ranks in the Midwest. There are also more cynical interpretations, like that of Allen L. Otten, who wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Mr. Nixon's trust-buster, Richard McLaren, can attack conglomerate acquisitions and arouse less-than-expected business outrage—because so many of the acquiring companies appear to the traditionalists to be run by ravenous freebooters, and Democratic freebooters at that, while many of the threatened firms are run by good old Republican businessmen happy to have the Justice Department on their side, at least this once."

Certainly the Nixon administration has not made opposition to economic concentration a universal principle. A case in point is the President's proposal to transfer to private industry the three uranium enrichment plants now owned by the government. These plants are the key to nuclear power production, as well as to the making of nuclear weapons. (Even under the present system, which permits private ownership of nuclear fuel, though not of the facilities for making it, private manufacture of nuclear bombs is well within the range of possibility. Enough enriched uranium has already slipped through the meshes of existing controls, and is today unaccounted for, to make a number of bombs.) The transfer to private ownership would at best place control of most of the world's capacity for producing nuclear fuel in the hands of a maximum of three corporations. But as Representative Chet Holifield of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy has pointed out, the only potential purchasers likely to have enough money to pay for the plants would be the major international oil companies, which have already been acquiring a dominant position in the third major fuel—coal. Thus, sale of the plants would involve the risk of placing control of all three basic fuels in the same few hands.

Three oil companies which also controlled the production of nuclear fuel would probably be able to dominate the energy market, but today the oil industry still remains economically—and politically—highly competitive. On many issues—even the depreciation allowance—different groups of oil companies take sharply antagonistic

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positions. President Nixon discovered this when he undertook to substitute a tariff for the quota system which, together with the limitations imposed on production by the state of Texas (in the name of conservation), has kept the price of petroleum products high. The change was strongly supported by those international oil companies whose major production was outside the United States, as well as by petroleum-consuming industries. The original proposals considered by the administration appear to have involved a fairly low tariff, and a consequent substantial reduction in the price of oil. But the Presidential task force considering the question seems to have discovered that there are a good many campaign contributors deep in the heart of Texas; at any rate, the final recommendation is now expected to be for a very high tariff, which will lead to only a slight drop in the price of petroleum products—though it may give the international companies a bigger share of the market than they now have.

The administration did surprise most people when, in what initially appeared to be the first far-reaching tax-reform program in a generation, it included a proposal for a reduction in the oil depreciation allowance. But analysts soon showed that although the official rate was 27 per cent, other provisions of the law limited the amount that most oil companies were able to use, so that neither the small cut proposed by the President nor the slightly larger one in the final bill would actually increase company taxes.

INDEED, THE tax reforms which had started out so bravely did not, in the event, come to very much. Responsibility for this disappointing setback is pretty well divided between the administration and both houses of Congress, although the bill which emerged from the House Ways and Means Committee did on the whole go further than either the administration's proposals or the final bill. The most important reform was the repeal of the investment credit; on this, the administration had been loath to act, but finally let itself be persuaded by the obvious role of the credit in spurring inflation. (It is ironical that this monstrosity, which has tended to distort both the economy and the tax structure, was introduced by the Kennedy administration and then briefly repealed and rapidly reinstated under President Johnson, although it was always vigorously opposed by labor.) To counterbalance the effect of eliminating the investment credit, the administration—even while asserting that lack of funds made it necessary to restrict social services—proposed a cut in the corporate income tax. But when it quickly became clear that the proposal would not get out of committee, much less pass either house, the President dropped it. Similarly, the administration's reported plans to propose the elimination of taxation on corporate dividends seem to have died aborning in the face of overwhelming Congressional opposition.

Two provisions sponsored by Senator Gore of Tennessee and inserted in the bill over the objection of the President provided for a gradual increase in the personal exemption from $600 to $800 and a "low-income deduction" of $1,000 to replace itemized deductions for low-bracket taxpayers; the combined effect will be to make it unnecessary for a few million individuals to file returns. But the major benefit of the increased exemptions—which in real value are nevertheless far smaller than the $600 exemption was thirty-odd years ago—accrues not to the low-bracket taxpayers but to the high-bracket ones. (By contrast, a flat credit against taxes, based on the number of exemptions, would have given the same reduction to all taxpayers, whatever their bracket.) The President, however, did not object to this inequity but rather to what he called the inflationary effect of the increased exemption. Since it replaced reductions which he had wanted to give higher-bracket taxpayers, and since the increase in exemptions was not to go into effect in the current year in any case, this objection hardly seemed valid. Even less valid—though more successful—was the President's resistance to the proposal to increase minimum social security payments to $100 a month; even that sum could hardly be considered an inducement to grow old prematurely.

If the tax reform bill, in its final form, can scarcely be said to make any great changes in the economic or social structure, the President's welfare proposals do herald a radical departure in national policy. These proposals accept maintenance of a minimum income standard for all Americans as a *federal* responsibility. If adopted, they would provide payments to workers until income from employment reached a level substantially higher than the basic minimum. This is not to say that the standards the President has suggested are generous ones; they are far below the relief standards at present in effect in most Northern states. The principal beneficiaries would be citizens of those states whose present standards are the lowest (although the burden on the higher benefit states might be lightened somewhat by the reduction in the number of those forced to migrate from the South by starvation).

In rhetoric and to some extent in fact, the President's plan is loaded with questionable features. One of these provides for compulsory vocational training and acceptance of employment—which sounds fine until one recalls that the great majority of relief families consist of mothers with small children and no adult males. Indeed, it was precisely in the belief that a child's welfare required his mother's presence at home that Congress instituted the first federal assistance program, the origin of the present Aid to Dependent

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Children, under the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921. Hence, in this respect, the Nixon plan appears retrogressive. Questions may also be raised with regard to the plan's proposals for job-training, which is to be administered by the states, and which would replace vocational training programs now operating under federal auspices. A very real danger exists that in many states such a provision would in fact become an instrument for the enforcement of peonage. Certainly one may hope that Congress, before it adopts the proposals, will revise them drastically.

But having said all this, one must recognize that the establishment of the principle of federal responsibility for guaranteeing a minimum standard to all is a major step forward. It can form the basis for a qualitative change in the nature of public assistance similar to that which resulted from the establishment of the Social Security system. Once the first step has been taken, standards will inevitably rise toward a more adequate level. (Indeed, the President has already made one significant improvement in his original plan; where he had proposed that the payments under it replace all existing federal programs, including food stamps, he now wishes to keep the latter on a basis which would in effect increase the minimum by about 50 per cent above his original figure.) The President's minimum-income plan would in its present form certainly not abolish poverty in the United States, or even reduce the number of poor people; eventually, however, it could point the way toward the achievement of that goal.

IN MATTERS of special concern to the non-white population of the United States, the administration's record is an unhappy one. In school desegregation, the administration began by discarding the weapon of withholding funds from districts which failed to comply with the law. Instead, it announced that it would depend on court action to enforce desegregation. But when the Department of Justice *did* go to court, it was to ask not for enforcement but for delay in the application of the law; even after the courts overruled the administration position, on the motion of private plaintiffs, and held that time had run out on the "deliberate speed" called for by the Supreme Court sixteen years ago, the Department continued to support those who sought further postponements. To be sure, the Justice Department has begun to initiate suits in racially-gerrymandered Northern districts, but this should properly be seen as a supplement to, not a substitute for, federal efforts to promote integration in the South.

The administration's policy in regard to the extension of the voting-rights bill has followed a similar line. Instead of proposing the continuance of the bill in its present form, which has made possible a spectacular rise in the number of Negro voters in the South, the President has sought to put through a bill which would withdraw the protections that have made registration possible, on the pretext of establishing uniform provisions throughout the country. But the provisions of the 1965 law were not drawn in regional terms; they were based on objective criteria of need. By abolishing those criteria, the Nixon proposal—which the administration and its segregationist allies pushed through the House by a five-vote margin—weakens the enforcement machinery of the government to a point where it may prove impotent. And by dropping the requirement for federal approval of any changes in the voting laws of the states in question, it opens the way to new attempts at disfranchisement.

All this is an aspect of the "Southern strategy" which is the special contribution of Attorney General Mitchell. It is perhaps the most essential part, since if most Negroes are able to vote, it will not be possible to win many Southern states by playing the game of the Thurmonds. Yet the election of Linwood Holton as Virginia's first Republican governor in this century, far from confirming the soundness of the Southern strategy, is an indication that it is as unsound as it is cynical. For Holton was elected with the support of the labor and civil-rights movements, not that of the old-line segregationists whom the administration is wooing, and he has made it clear that he stands with those who want to bring the 20th century to the South.

The most blatant example of the Southern strategy, of course, was the nomination of Clement Haynsworth to sit on the Supreme Court.* Haynsworth had nothing whatsoever to recommend him for the post except a consistent record of judicial opposition to labor and civil rights. His career was so lacking in distinction that one could only wonder at a President who would consider him a fit member of the Supreme Court, even if there had been no other reason for objecting to him. But what is inexplicable was the administration's failure to know in advance of the pattern of conflict of interest which had characterized Haynsworth's conduct on the bench; it

* President Nixon has asserted that he is nominating "strict constructionists" to the Court. This is a misuse of the English language. A strict constructionist is one who hews to the letter of the Constitution; a loose constructionist is one who finds in it justification for governmental acts which its terms do not on the surface authorize. The judges who overruled social legislation a generation ago considered themselves, with some justification, strict constructionists. But in terms of the issues which have recently concerned the Court most controversially, it is Justices Warren, Douglas, and Black who have been the strict constructionists; they have given the First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments something close to their literal meaning. The loose constructionists are those like Justice Burger who are willing to interpret away the bans on involuntary confessions, arbitrary detention, and unauthorized search and seizure, or like Judge Haynsworth, who would do the same with the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

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argues an almost incredible degree of incompetence on the part of the Attorney General who proposed his appointment. Alternatively, if the administration *did* know even a significant part of what was revealed in the hearings and debate on the nomination, then its own standards of public morality are brought into serious question. Nor are one's fears on this point put to rest by the haste with which Chief Justice Warren Burger pushed through the revocation of the standards of conduct which the Judicial Council had adopted, after the Fortas scandal, on Earl Warren's initiative. It is reported that Justice Burger actively lobbied for the Haynsworth nomination, and in the course of doing so asserted that if Haynsworth was not fit to sit on the Supreme Court, neither was he—a disquieting thought.

The nomination of George Harrold Carswell continues the same pattern. Judge Carswell's avowal in 1948 that he was unalterably devoted to the doctrine of white supremacy would not in itself necessarily be a fatal fault; Hugo Black's one-time membership in the Klan has not detracted from the quality of his service on the Court. The trouble is that there is little in Carswell's subsequent record as a politician or as a judge that is inconsistent with the views he expressed in 1948.

The low caliber of President Nixon's nominees is not an inherent defect of Presidential "conservatism"; some of the best appointments to the Supreme Court were made by Herbert Hoover and Dwight Eisenhower. But both Hoover and Eisenhower were men with a strong feeling for American traditions, and a consequent regard for the dignity of the Court. Hoover, moreover, was himself a man of intellectual distinction. This was a quality Dwight Eisenhower would never have claimed for himself, but his Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, who recommended the Warren, Brennan, and Harlan appointments, was a major legal figure.

Finally, while the administration's record on civil rights has been distinctly poor, it has exhibited a split personality on questions of civil liberties. At times—particularly when Attorney General Mitchell has spoken, either in person or through his wife—the sounds have been ominous. The threat to "investigate" the organizers of the November 15 Mobilization to see whether they had violated any law certainly comes under the heading of misuse of office for the harassment of political opponents—particularly since it came *after* the demonstration had been conducted peacefully despite what was widely regarded as a Justice Department effort to provoke a confrontation. On the other hand, there have been no strictly political prosecutions, except for the Chicago trial, which was apparently already in preparation when the present administration took office and is being prosecuted by a holdover U.S. Attorney, so that responsibility for it is shared by this administration and its predecessor.* Again, Secretary Robert Finch has clearly set out to clean up the repressive policies indulged in by the security staff of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare since the Eisenhower administration. Solicitor General Erwin Griswold, a holdover from the Johnson administration, has long been known as a civil libertarian; he is probably responsible for the decision of the government not to appeal a court ruling banning the requirement of a loyalty oath from prospective government employees. And the President himself, declaring that it was not the place of the government to police the campus, has at least suggested that he will not attempt to carry out Congressionally-authorized sanctions against student dissidents. The administration has also decided to ask the repeal of the McCarran Act provision authorizing preventive detention.

On the whole, President Nixon's first year has been notable neither for its accomplishments nor for its derelictions. Rather, it has been characterized chiefly by a systematic effort to postpone major decisions. There have been some small steps forward, usually in response to Congressional or other pressure, and some promises of major ones. But they are still promises. There also have been some retrogressive steps, notably in civil rights, some bad and even very bad appointments, and many instances of bad judgment. All in all, however, there have been no major disasters. President Nixon has succeeded, according to the Gallup Poll, in holding the approval of 61 per cent of the voters. This is the lowest level of approval for any President at the end of his first year since the present type of public opinion poll began, but it is still a majority.

In his first year the President has had the advantage of being judged by two standards easy to meet, if not to surpass—popular experience of Lyndon Johnson and popular expectation of Richard Nixon. This advantage has enabled him to buy time. But unless he makes much more effective use of it in his second year than he has done so far, he could be in for serious trouble, particularly if, as seems likely, there is a major recession, or if there is a renewed flareup of the war in Vietnam.

* The preparations for the trial, however, were apparently undertaken by U.S. Attorney Foran without the consent, and even contrary to the specific instructions, of Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

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The Poverty of Affluence

Robert Lekachman

IF WE ARE so rich, why do we feel so poor? As it concerns the fifth or so of Americans who subsist in official poverty, the question need not detain anyone. By criteria old or new, these casualties of affluence lack much of what their fellow citizens define as essential to a minimum American standard of life. But what is the occasion for the complaints, dissatisfactions, and demonstrations of so many other people, ranging in economic status from New York City East Siders scraping by on $50,000 a year, through militant unionists rejecting contracts which improve on annual incomes of $13,000-$15,000, to the half of the population disaffected because their earnings fall below the national median of $8,000 a year? The prophets tell those who still hearken to their words that in 1971, or even in 1970, the Gross National Product of the United States will break the trillion mark—a thousand billion, no less. The endless flow of goods, services, and junk which issues from the factories and the offices grows by $30, $40, even $50 billion annually,* and in absolute terms, even after adjustment for rising prices, each lucky American's share of the loot expands every year, unless he has encountered some sort of personal misfortune and fallen behind the affluent procession or, worse, never joined it.

Is the economic discontent of the 1960's entirely the result of individual expectations which have risen even faster than income? Should the advertising agencies be given the "credit" for training Americans to be perfect consumers? I wonder whether the matter is quite that simple. It is much too easy to blame it all on hucksters who, after all, are flesh of our flesh. Although Madison Avenue appears to elect our Presidents, its power probably does not extend so completely to the more important realm of commerce. This is not to deny the advertiser's intention to create wants, arouse dissatisfaction with present possessions, play upon the jealousies, sexual competitions, and personal perceptions of inadequacy with which modern man is lavishly endowed, and thus triumphantly cajole from the pockets of the customers whatever scraps of currency or credit they may possess. But there is little or nothing that is new or startling about these strategies; moreover, consumers are by now sufficiently sophisticated in their responses and advertising itself sufficiently self-cancelling in its effects so that the phenomenon of advertising can no longer be cited to explain why the 1960's, by all conventional measures so much more prosperous than the 1930's, should have stimulated so many to give such vociferous tongue to their financial complaints.

One source of the trouble is all too familiar: the differential impact of a price inflation which has been accelerating since the escalation of the Vietnam war in 1965. Of course, for some people—bankers, doctors, lawyers, miscellaneous consultants, and, until that bubble burst, conglomerate promoters—inflation is a heavenly season. For anyone fast on his financial feet a bull market and a buoyant price level are the stuff of which personal fortunes and business legends are constructed. This is the world, already receding into myth, celebrated in Adam Smith's *The Money Game*. Once young gun-slingers prowled the Wall Street canyons, and when they shot it out at high noon, they and the mutual funds they managed were all richer and nobody fell dead. In a falling market, alas, there are no financial wizards, least of all the performance men of the mutual funds. After the binge, comes the hangover.

But a good many unfortunates enjoyed no binge, although they have not been excused from the effects of their betters' indulgences. As ever, the major victims of contemporary inflation are the weak, the unprotected, and the immobile. Thus in 1969—a year when the cost of living jumped 6 per cent—New York State's "liberal" Governor recommended, and the legislature enthusiastically endorsed, *reductions* in dollar payments to welfare and Medicaid recipients. If the point had previously escaped their attention, welfare clients

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* To give some idea of the extent of these year-to-year changes (the numbers are expressed in 1958 prices): in 1961 the Gross National Product was $497.2 billion; in 1962 GNP was $529.8 billion; 1963, $551.0 billion; 1964, $581.1 billion; 1965, $617.8 billion; 1966, $657.1 billion; 1967, $673.1 billion; and 1968, $706.9 billion.

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were placed on notice that it is highly uncomfortable to be poor and dependent on gifts from the public purse. But even more generally esteemed categories of the citizenry—elderly pensioners, thrifty souls living upon interest from past savings, members of weak unions, the less militant civil servants, and small businessmen confronted with prohibitively high interest charges and intolerably high lease-renewal terms—have found themselves losing ground to the cost of living.

THE GENERAL rule of inflation still holds: in a capitalist society, income and wealth are redistributed in the direction of still greater inequality. Profits, the most volatile of income sources, go up steeply while capital gains, which are not even measured as a portion of the Gross National Product, inflate the wealth of the astute still more notably than do profits. As long as prices rise and the stock market goes up, expense accounts are fattened and ingenious executive compensation schemes flourish. It is no wonder that factory wages in real terms have in recent years ceased to improve. Indeed, the average blue-collar worker was worse off in 1969 than he was in 1968. Inflation authorizes sharp operators of all varieties to print their own money, quite legally. This funny money is inflation's cream. What is left for the remainder of the public is pale, blue, fat-free milk. No wonder militant blue-collar workers demand 10 and 11 per cent wage improvements. No wonder frugal souls feel cheated when they realize that every dollar they have saved at 5 per cent interest is now worth 99 cents after a year of 6 per cent price inflation. It is a poor time for the practice of Poor Richard's maxims.

All this, however, is too well known to require comment. What does need exploration, though, is the malaise of the prosperous that is rooted in the everyday context of life in the cities and the suburbs. The national mythology holds that such sinful Babylons as New York and Los Angles will be supplied with the polluted air that their inhabitants no doubt deserve. But even in such staunchly conservative country as western Suffolk County the air, like the water, is of uncertain quality. As *Newsweek* sagely observed some time ago, it is impossible to get anywhere. Looking, after its fashion, into the 1970's *Esquire* played amiably with the fancy of Governor Rockefeller's assassination by a maddened Long Island Railroad commuter. The jury promptly exonerated the assassin on the grounds of justifiable homicide. All that an optimist might say about the Long Island Railroad is that its rival, the Long Island Expressway, is nearly as slow and twice as dangerous. Wherever he looks, the consumer finds that the quality of his experience is deteriorating. Houses are still worse built than of yore. If products are not more adulterated than ever, they are more alertly suspected of adulteration. Crime, if not necessarily greater, is more greatly feared. So runs the litany of despond—urban, suburban, rural.

Why don't the demon calculators of the Department of Commerce and the National Bureau of Economic Research record these community trials? After all, the national-income statistician, as human as the next commuter, frays his soul with the same daily afflictions as any other office worker. Yet the canons of his craft apparently prevent him from identifying and measuring the various ills which accompany the multitudinous goods routinely totted up in the national ledger. What he is expected to compute is identified in the following definition: "The gross national product . . . is the total market value of the goods and services produced by our economy for a specified period of time, usually a year."* This quite representative definition is notable for its utter neutrality. An unassuming man, the economist makes no value judgments of his fellow citizens' tastes. Whether the customers prefer the Beatles to Bach, football to ballet, *Reader's Digest* to COMMENTARY, or *Oh! Calcutta!* to *Othello* is absolutely none of the national-income analyst's professional business. Nor does his private opinion gain force from his professional skills. But this apparently harmless and even ingratiating (scholars ought to be humble!) posture can be shown to sanction some very odd and even ridiculous consequences. Thus, if cigarette smoking were to double, the increase would naturally show up as an expansion of the consumer component of the Gross National Product. And if the corollary were a parallel rise in medical expenditure for the treatment of lung cancer, tuberculosis, heart ailments, and emphysema, this too would be solemnly added to the GNP. If a new pulp mill discharges chemical wastes into a hitherto clean stream, the GNP will go up, not only because of the mill's valuable output but also because other enterprises and municipalities located downstream from the polluter will be compelled to invest in cleansing devices required to return the water to usable condition. Similarly, the GNP rises both with automobile sales and with the increased consumer expenditure for the cleaning of furniture, clothes, lungs, and bodies, necessitated by such purchases.

In *The Affluent Society*, John Kenneth Galbraith bitingly castigated the triviality into which modern commercial society has plunged us all. His service was akin to the one performed in the 1920's by R. H. Tawney and still earlier by Thorstein Veblen. Their point remains valid: enormous proportions of the goods and services which constitute the Gross National Product cater to trivial and capricious tastes, leave their purchasers unsatisfied, and create an undivine discontent which is turned to the commercial profit of the purveyors of still newer fashions and gadgets. So

* See Norman F. Keiser, *Economics: Analysis and Policy*, Wiley, p. 190.

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long, indeed, as the community's income is distributed with gross inequality, the inconsequential wants of the affluent will be filled by the market before the quite pressing wants of poorer persons are attended to, if they ever are. The economists who celebrate most strenuously the virtues of free markets seldom add that the freest of markets achieve their triumphs of allocation and maximization only within the context of a given distribution of income and wealth. If that distribution is inequitable (does anyone doubt that it is?), then the pattern of national output is distorted by the strength of the inequitably rich and the weakness of the inequitably poor.

I take it to be a mark of the dangerous deterioration of our economy and society that the Galbraith of the 1950's now reads like a sunny optimist. One response to *The Affluent Society* readily available to Galbraith's critics was the assertion that a man should be free to make his own errors of choice. At best, he would learn from them and become a better consumer. At worst, he was conceded by the Constitution and the economics profession alike the freedom to make his own life miserable. Even so, there was no convincing reason for a community to promote the trivial and neglect communal amenities. Nevertheless, if all that a man ruined by his misguided choices were himself, the case for inaction would be strong.

But in fact, the situation is both more complex and more dangerous. The mechanism of consumer choice is so radically defective that we are compelled against our wishes to consume some items (not necessarily purchased by ourselves) and deprived of the opportunity to choose others which we might prefer. The ubiquitous motor car exemplifies this condition. When a motorist acquires a car powered by an internal combustion engine, he purchases transportation, pleasure, and, conceivably, the enjoyable contemplation of his neighbors' envy. He also endows himself with a little additional air pollution from the emissions of his engine. He is not, however, offered a choice between a car (at a higher price) which traps and dissipates the noxious vapor and another car (at a lower price) which poisons the atmosphere around it; he is limited to the product as is (pleasure plus pollution) or none at all.

Limited as it is, however, the consumer at least has some choice. But unless our hypothetical motorist emigrates to Nevada or Wyoming, he has no choice at all in regard to the quality of the air he breathes. Whether or not his own possessions add minutely to the fouling of his environment, he cannot escape from breathing the air which his fellow citizens have adulterated for him. Air, as the statisticians see the world, is a free good (or ill) and it is, therefore, unmeasured. The result is by now familiar: if the output of cars and air pollution grows, not only will the second fail to enter the national accounts as an offset to the first, but the Gross National Product will be further swelled by the extra cleaning and medical costs.

TIME AND AGAIN the cherished free market enforces this limited (or non-) choice upon consumers who by buying what is thrust upon them, according to official doctrine, are thereby casting their dollar votes for the manufacturers who compete for their favor. Yet even if markets were unrigged and consumers as rational as economists sometimes generously presume them to be, they could not buy appliances that function with reasonable reliability, foods innocent of chemical preservatives, medicines uninflated by the pharmaceutical companies' labeling and marketing maneuvers, or living space securely protected from intolerable environmental noise.

The last item is worth a moment's attention. Perhaps you bought a house fifteen or twenty years ago in the general vicinity of Kennedy Airport. At the time the planes were few, small, and relatively quiet. As the years have gone by, the traffic has become brisker, the planes larger, and the noise many times greater. Your windows may not break very often, but the walls crack here and there; when air travel peaks you talk in shouts, and for practical purposes your radio and television set are useless irritants; your temper deteriorates, your sleep vanishes, and it is almost an understatement to add that your life is less wholesome than it used to be and your standard of living is psychically much lower. Yet again the statistician takes no note of the incidence or level of noise pollution. As with the parallel instance of air pollution, the national product will even rise if you are driven either to your druggist for chemical relief or to a psychiatrist.

What has occurred in all this can be put slightly differently. The airlines fly the most economical routes, at least until they are diverted by the agencies which indulgently regulate them. The logic of profit maximization (as powerful an imperative as the consumer's thrust toward utility maximization) imposes upon airline managements the obligation to keep costs to a minimum so that profits can be coaxed to their maximum possible value. Even if such were not the operative legal and ethical canons of behavior, the competition of vigorous rivals would force each airline management to select lowest-cost operating procedures. The executives of the airlines are seemingly vindicated by the popularity of air travel, the comparatively low fares, and the expansion of airlines and aircraft companies over the years.

Only a moment's reflection is needed to disclose just how misleading is this success story. The comparison of costs and benefits is perverted by the absence of a major, unrecorded, and unreimbursed cost—the decline in the usefulness and, therefore, in the real value of the property which airplanes fly over. If the airlines had been legally

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compelled to purchase the permission of property owners in their paths of flight, the outcome would have differed substantially from the present pattern of air traffic. If the airlines succeeded in purchasing the right of overflight, their costs and prices would have been sufficiently higher so that the volume of air travel would have been substantially lower. Indeed, mass air travel might have proven prohibitively expensive. A pity? Not at all. If by more accurate social-accounting devices, a product is so expensive that too few customers will pay the price necessary to justify its manufacture, this is simply a sign that resources ought to flow into other uses where costs are lower or demand is larger.*

The airline situation is paradigmatic. The simple truth is that a great many enterprises have expanded and many industries have flourished in part because they have been able to escape some of the costs of their own growth. These costs did not thereby disappear, they simply fell upon other enterprises, individuals, or the community at large. Autos, steel, chemicals, paper, and fabrics are among the children of external diseconomies unrecovered by society from the industries whose expansion generated them. Other prices and the general level of taxation are higher and other industries and the public sector are smaller because the favored few have been allowed to escape the full costs of their operations.

A word, I suppose, should in fairness be said on the other side of the account. Innovation has always been synonymous with disturbance of existing arrangements, and while some undoubtedly suffer from such disturbances others benefit and sometimes the gains are general. Which is to say that there are external economies as well as external diseconomies of private, unregulated growth. Yet in our time the nature of growth, particularly in the urban context in which it is concentrated, renders it almost certain that the external diseconomies of growth—the unreimbursed costs imposed on other people—have outpaced the external economies of growth—unreimbursed benefits conferred on other people. One phenomenon by itself justifies the conclusion: the sheer momentum of population growth. Only reluctantly, and very late in the day, are fair numbers of Americans approaching the judgment that larger communities are not necessarily happier or more peaceful communities. On the contrary, rapid urban growth practically guarantees that the housing stock has risen too slowly to fill new demands upon it, public services are ill-equipped to carry larger loads, mass transportation buckles under the strain, and the omnipresent automobile clogs roads rendered more inadequate than ever by the sheer pressure of clotted traffic. To say it simply, people impinge upon each other. The individual living spaces which define privacy and are essential to the preservation both of amenity and of civil freedom are narrowed by each escalation in the ratio of people to space.

For most Westerners, at least, the loss of personal space is tantamount to a reduction in the standard of life. Although in a country as large as the United States population increase need not entail loss of privacy, the outcome is politically and socially unavoidable as long as legal arrangements encourage the growth of private outputs at less than their true costs in disamenity, loss of privacy, inability to move conveniently from one place to another, and dangerous pollution of air and water.

No better example of the present idiocies of resource allocation could be imagined than the production of the supersonic transport plane. This prodigiously expensive piece of apparatus possesses a single virtue: it will fly the Atlantic in three instead of six hours—the solution to a problem which must afflict just about nobody. If it is confined to transoceanic flights it will disturb marine life and such stray mariners as stubbornly persist in treating the high seas as a route of commerce. However, if past precedent is a reliable guide, the engines of propaganda will soon be churning out an endless stream of "evidence" designed to demonstrate, for example, that land routes can be devised which avoid population centers, or that the noise level of the planes has been reduced to tolerable murmurs, or possibly that people, once accustomed to the merry, companionable sound of the sonic boom, really rather like the noise. This dangerously nonsensical national decision is a consequence in part of technological momentum, the superstition endemic in the 20th century that anything which engineers are capable of designing must *ipso facto* be thrust into production and operation. In this instance even the airlines and the aircraft companies, the natural parents of this folly, doubted their child's capacity to earn its way in the world, with the result that substantial public funds (with more to follow) have been devoted to the creation of a volume of aggressive noise unprecedented in an already adequately rackety country.

WHAT I HAVE thus far described is a characteristic defect of a quantitative society which measures whatever activity is readily susceptible to enumeration, and implicitly discounts the remainder, however vital to comfort and joy that remainder might just happen to be. The excellent gentlemen who gather, analyze, and promulgate the good news of growth in the Gross National Product are telling us less about the genuine state of our welfare with each of their monthly announcements.

* I should express my debt here to the distinguished English economist E. J. Mishan who in *The Costs of Economic Growth* (Praeger) and in his more recent "The Spillover Enemy" *(Encounter*, December 1969, pp. 3-13) has dealt sensitively and subtly with these issues, including the vexed case of airline overflights.

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I write this in December. It will be read some time after the Nixon economists issue that annual triumph of the Council of Economic Advisers, the *Economic Report of the President*. I do not risk the danger of being caught in that most embarrassing variety of speculation, the one readily exposed as foolish by those who encounter it, when I state my confidence that the three wise men of the Council of Economic Advisers will point with mingled pride and apprehension to a rise of $40 or $50 billion in the Gross National Product between 1968 and 1969. The pride will be in the national capacity to pour out larger volumes of merchandise, the apprehension will derive from a parallel capacity to place ever higher price tags on these good things. And, I suggest, a prudent soul will put absolutely no stock in the significance of the numbers as a measurement of anything except the limited nature of the things measured—of which the economic health of the community is not one.

At best, the national-income measures are an index of that proportion of human effort which is registered by the marketplace or permits of the imputation of market prices. Why should the upward or downward movement of such measures imply a movement of our economic welfare in the same direction? In the first place, the statistics take no account of the way the national output is distributed. The commonsense, liberal tradition of the West (which used to be but is no longer applied by economists) holds that redistribution of income and wealth toward equality promotes welfare, and redistribution in the opposite direction diminishes welfare. Here let me shamelessly ally myself with Hobson, Pigou, and Keynes, rather than with the modern welfare economists. The conclusion is then plain that an inflationary period robs the slow and enriches the quick, particularly those whose quickness assumes the shape of the speculator's maneuverability. Blue-collar and white-collar workers who consider themselves cheated are quite correct: inflation has cheated them by channeling the new money created by the Federal Reserve System in disproportionate quantities into the pockets of speculators, promoters, and sharpies who add little or nothing to the output of usable goods and services and a great deal to their own resources.

The numbers, it has been argued, are radically defective in another respect: their blind impartiality in lumping together goods and ills. The official measures swell the official totals by adding together pluses and minuses, but a more sophisticated sort of bookkeeping would include some corrective subtraction. Finally, our way of keeping the national accounts ignores the largest of all subtractions from affluence, the losses in amenity which are the consequences of overcrowding, pollution, transportation failures, housing shortages, and the sheer pressure of people upon one another.

Thus, the sense of deprivation which bewilders a great many middle-class, even moderately affluent, Americans comes as no surprise when one realizes that the conventional measures of affluence cover smaller and smaller proportions of what significantly affects the quality of everyday experience. It is, of course, indefensible that Americans allow the older forms of poverty to persist. These, should the national will to do so manifest itself, can be readily alleviated by income transfers in the shape of negative income taxes. But what is required to restore some sense of relationship between income and enjoyment for more prosperous Americans is a much more complicated affair.

I HAVE CONCERNED myself here with identifying a situation, and I shall conclude with no more than a general suggestion or two about the ways in which it can be improved. The first is that more realistic national measures of the influences affecting daily experience should be developed. If economists follow the path of enlightenment, they will, in their official and scholarly writings, place less emphasis upon quantitative income measures and exercise more ingenuity in inventing indices to measure overcrowding, congestion, public health hazards, pollution levels, transportation delays, and amenity costs. One day, perhaps, statisticians will deflate the Gross National Product by an index-of-amenity movement as an important supplement to the price deflators now conventionally applied. I take it as a fact of common experience that we are all poorer than we are publicly told that we are, but until the experts seriously apply themselves to measurement, we cannot know by how much we are actually poorer than the inflated national income estimates say we are.

Two routes at least of public policy are open. One is a more rational organization of national priorities. In a general way what is needed is striking enough to be a commonplace: less money should be committed to military hardware, foreign adventurism, space exploration, road construction, and the care and feeding of rich farmers, shipbuilders, oil magnates, and real-estate speculators; more money is urgently required for the revitalization of the cities: mass transit, low-cost housing, new satellite towns, schools and colleges, hospitals and clinics. More money still is needed in the shape of straight-income subsidy to the poor in the shape, as suggested, of negative income taxes. A reconsideration of public expenditure priorities should go hand in hand with the sort of statute which limits the harms legally permitted private producers—safety regulations, anti-pollution requirements, food and drug inspection, and the like.

The second route to improved public policy harks back to some of the analysis presented by E. J. Mishan and involves a more subtle use of

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the market to register rather more of the costs which enter into private expansion than is now possible. Suppose that the law defined as part of the rights of property the quiet enjoyment of its possession and required of potential infringers of such enjoyment successful negotiation with all the property owners affected. Noise, which is unpleasant, could be bartered for a price which could be converted into offsetting pleasures. Owners would be reimbursed and noise polluters would be made to bear the full economic burden of their operations. If they could find sufficient numbers of customers willing to accept a partial or complete transfer of that burden, well and good. If not, as the argument holds, then it would be a mistake to commit resources to this particular enterprise. The principle is extendable to a good deal of water and air pollution as well. As Mishan correctly emphasizes, definition of this new dimension of property rights is an extension of the efficiency of private markets, not a bureaucratic invasion of free choice. A nation of lawyers and economists should not find it beyond the communal ingenuity to define some of the more important amenity losses, devise financial remedies for these losses, and allocate the cost to those who have caused them.

WE ARE NOW at the very beginning of sensible attempts to preserve an environment in which private production really has very much to do with economic health. It is safe to say that so long as we think that economic growth as currently measured really is the occasion for rejoicing when the Gross National Product leaps, we shall be measured as rich, and increasingly we shall define ourselves as thwarted, deprived, cheated—and poor.

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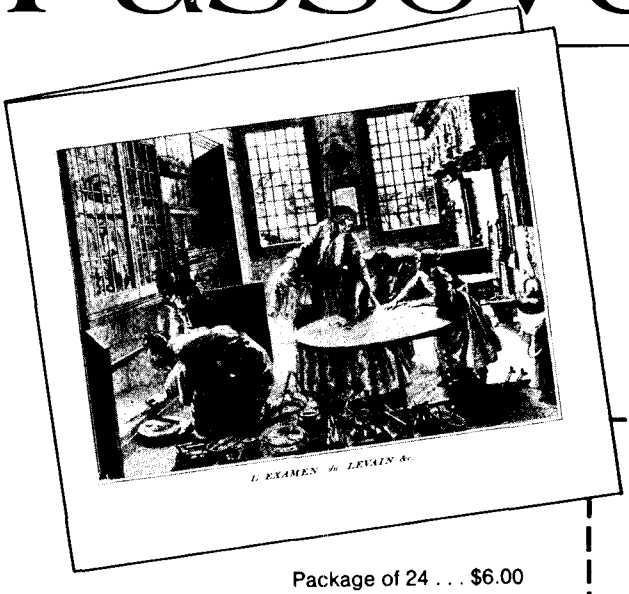

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The U.S., the Arabs & Israel

Anthony Hartley

TO WHAT DEGREE has the Nixon administration changed American policy in the Middle East? This question must be asked with increasing urgency in Jerusalem and, with a rather more hopeful note, in Cairo and Damascus. For it has become clear in recent months that the administration is gestating a new plan to cope with the Middle East crisis; indeed, the partial results of a birth—which, if not prodigious, was at any rate enigmatic—were communicated to the public in the Secretary of State's speech of December 9. Significantly enough, the proposals enumerated by Mr. Rogers for the conclusion of a peace between Israel and Egypt had already been communicated to the Soviet Union in October. Later in December they were supplemented by a similar American plan for peace between Israel and Jordan. A new Nixon policy for the Middle East crisis (if it is new) is therefore now out in the open. How much of a change does it represent—how much of a change, indeed, is possible—in comparison with the policies of the Johnson administration?

Before trying to answer this question, it might be well to summarize what has been proposed. In his speech of December 9, Mr. Rogers grouped his suggestions around three basic points. These provided that:

1) "There should be a binding commitment by Israel and the United Arab Republic to peace with each other, with all the specific obligations of peace spelled out. . . ."

2) "The detailed provisions of peace relating to security safeguards on the ground should be worked out between the parties under Ambassador Jarring's auspices, utilizing the procedures followed in negotiating the Armistice Agreements under Ralph Bunche in 1949 at Rhodes. . . . These safeguards relate primarily to the area of Sharm el-Sheikh controlling access to the Gulf of Aqaba, the need for demilitarized zones as foreseen in the Security Council resolution, and final arrangements in the Gaza strip."

3) "In the context of peace and agreement on specific security safeguards, withdrawal of Israeli forces from Egyptian territory would be required."

Also contained in the Secretary's speech was a vaguely worded proposal for Jerusalem to become "a unified city," a point subsequently repeated in the Jordan peace plan. This latter differed from the Egyptian proposals only in admitting the possibility of frontier changes—"insubstantial alterations required for mutual security"—presumably because Israel's frontier with Jordan before June 1967 was so illogical as to encourage border incidents.

In all this, at first sight, there is nothing very new. The United States has always accepted the ambiguously drafted Security Council resolution of November 1967 which called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from conquered territory. It has always been in favor of peace negotiations between Arabs and Israelis and of some arrangement which would provide for the security of all concerned. (The Secretary's remarks about Jerusalem *were* novel, but, although they seem to have excited the strongest reaction on the Israeli side, their lack of concrete detail makes them a relatively minor element in the whole scheme.) However, a careful reading of the proposals and of Mr. Rogers's speech does suggest that a shift of emphasis has taken place. Far greater stress has been placed on Israeli withdrawal and far less on subjects like freedom of navigation and recognition of Israel's existence as a state than was the case, for instance, in President Johnson's speech of June 16, 1967. Nor is there any mention of a great-power guarantee of the resulting settlement. On the other hand, coupled with the plan for the first time is an offer to restore diplomatic relations with those Arab states that had broken them off in 1967.

The entire context in which the new proposals have been put forward is such as to create a feeling of disquiet among supporters of Israel. "Our policy is and will continue to be a balanced one" may seem a reasonable statement of the part America should play in the Middle East crisis, but, to an Israeli, it must inevitably give the impression that while the Soviet Union will continue to support its Arab clients, American assistance to Israel is likely to be less forthcoming than in the past. Arms sales are, of course, the chief case in point. Where is Israel now to obtain arms if not from the United States? A U.S. embargo on arms to both sides could be defined as "balanced," but its effect would be to produce a serious imbalance on the spot.

It could therefore be maintained that there has been a shift, both in the verbal expression of American policy toward Israel, and in its spirit. At the time of the Six-Day War, the State Department's declaration of neutrality had to be

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withdrawn under pressure from the White House. It is hard to imagine any such incident occurring today. In June of 1967, Richard H. Rovere could write from Washington: "No one here thinks that we could have avoided some kind of military involvement if the war had gone on for more than a week or two, or if there had been at any point a period of a few days in which the outcome was in doubt." It would be foolhardy to be quite so categorical about the Washington of President Nixon. The change may be one of emphasis, but it exists. What has brought it about?

THE NIXON administration's attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict must first of all be seen against the background of American public opinion. If one thing has been made clear over the past three years, it is that Americans increasingly desire to cultivate their own garden and not to be involved in intervention overseas. Weariness of global power, reaction to an apparently endless struggle in Vietnam, a consciousness of the urgency of domestic problems—all these have combined to build up a high level of resistance in the public mind toward any step that might lead to new military commitments. Such a mood was bound to affect unfavorably Israeli expectations of American support. President Nixon's political antennae would have been functioning at a low level indeed if they had not told him that, with the war in Vietnam still continuing, any involvement in the Middle East—quite apart from its intrinsic dangers—would be highly unpopular at home. The present introspective mood of the American people has meant a tendency to turn away from problems of foreign policy or to try to settle them on terms that will lessen the demands made on the United States. The perennial crisis between Israel and the Arab states is no exception.

In the view of the State Department, of course, America's interests have always provided excellent reasons for not pushing support of Israel too far. In fact, it might be said that Mr. Rogers's "balanced" policy simply represents a logical extension of the traditional State Department position. The very existence of the Arab-Israeli dispute, combined with the fact that the United States has not been able to dissociate itself from Israel in Arab eyes, has caused a profound deterioration of America's position in the Arab world; it is perfectly understandable, therefore, that the State Department, like the British Foreign Office before it, should wish to be rid of the problem at any cost. Now, the most convenient way to achieve this aim is to put pressure on Israel—an operation for which the United States possesses the necessary leverage—rather than on the Arabs, whose intransigence cannot be affected by Washington and who, in any case, can rely on the Soviet Union for support. If such a policy does not hold out much hope of actually bringing about an agreement, one might argue that it would at least improve America's image in the Arab world, ease the position of the so-called "conservative" Arab regimes (Lebanon with its banks, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms with their oil), and render them less liable to overthrow by *coup d'état* in the Libyan manner. Moreover, the argument might continue, such a policy would lessen the danger of a confrontation with the Soviet Union in the Eastern Mediterranean—an area where it is becoming increasingly difficult for American military forces to operate. If the Arab-Israeli dispute cannot be ended —and this, no doubt, would be the first objective of American diplomacy—then something could be done to salvage American economic interests in Arab countries. Those interests are real (they include annually, according to the *Economist*, $1.7 billion in earnings), and their spokesmen—oil men, airline companies, and so forth—have been making their voices heard in Washington. As against them, support of Israel has little to offer by way of material gain.

The Nixon policy in the Middle East, therefore, operates on two distinct levels. First, it is an attempt to prevent the United States from being drawn into another Arab-Israeli war. Precisely because, in 1967, America could not have avoided "some kind of military involvement if the war had gone on for more than a week or two," it has seemed urgent to the new administration to assume a somewhat more distant attitude toward the conflict. For although the Soviet Union cannot want the destruction of Israel, if only because its continued existence assures Russian preponderance in the area, no one can be certain of Moscow's control over Arab client states supplied with Russian arms and encouraged by Russian support. The direction of Soviet policy in the Middle East has been simultaneously to avoid a direct clash with the United States and to extract the maximum profit from the situation. If the Russians were forced to choose between these two objectives, it is hard to say which path they would decide to follow and what the consequences of that decision might be. It is clearly the aim of President Nixon's policy to avoid confronting them with any such agonizing choice.

Secondly, the shift toward the Arab position discernible in Mr. Rogers's speech of December 9 is designed to do what can be done to improve the American position within the Arab world—an area which now includes North Africa as well as the Middle East. Here again there are reminiscences of earlier British policies, aptly described some years ago by a high Foreign Office functionary who remarked that he was on the side neither of Israel nor of the Arabs, but of the Iraq Petroleum Company.

At present, American policy toward Israel is being influenced by considerations which may

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always have been present in the minds of those directly concerned with United States foreign policy, but which under President Johnson were subordinated to the kind of domestic political considerations that have traditionally swayed Democratic administrations in their dealings with Israel. President Nixon is said to have written off the vote of the Northeastern seaboard and is unlikely to get political support from the New York Jewish community whatever he does. He can, therefore, afford to listen to the advice of those professional policymakers who have always felt that the United States was overidentified with Israel. Moreover, after the Six-Day War, there is in Washington an increased awareness of the dangers intrinsic to the Middle East and, after Vietnam, a reluctance to be drawn into them.

THE FOREGOING description of the new shape of American Middle East policy suggests that it is inspired by much the same spirit of prudent *Realpolitik* as presides over many of the new administration's activities. Yet it is not enough to wish to be realistic, especially since, in the past, a good deal of so-called "political realism" has turned out to be merely the taking of short-term views. In order to change a policy one must first be sure that it can be changed, that the material available is not so intractable as to leave little opportunity for the construction of viable alternatives. Otherwise, there will be a risk of generating policies which neither produce the results expected of them nor have the advantages of what they are supposed to replace: courses of action usually possessing some form of historical justification for their existence. In fact, the new American policy in the Middle East is by no means as hardheaded a piece of *Realpolitik* as it is intended to appear. It bears, indeed, many of the characteristics of hasty improvisation on the part of policy planners who feel that they should do something, but have little idea of what that something ought to be. It is hence open to criticism on several counts. In what follows I have intentionally neglected to deal at length with the moral and emotional factors—they are in themselves numerous and compelling—which would argue for continued American support of Israel. But even leaving out of account the moral side of the question, I believe there are serious flaws running through the assumptions on which the Nixon policy is based, and that it is by no means certain that American interests will best be served by a demonstration of impartiality intended to placate the Arabs.

A critique of the Nixon policy in the Middle East might begin with a discussion of two assumptions on which it appears to rest. The first one is that Arab nationalists will in fact be duly appeased by an American shift toward their point of view. The second is that stability in the area will be increased if the United States takes up a position more distant from that of Israel and closer to that of the Russians and their Arab clients than has been the case in the past.

The first assumption is demonstrably very risky. The rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco will very probably be glad to have some evidence that the United States is taking into consideration their need to show that they are not allied to the ally of Israel. But the number of these "conservative" Arab states is rapidly dwindling, and those that remain seem destined sooner or later to follow Libya down the path of revolutionary nationalism. As for the Arab nationalist movement itself, its leaders will be satisfied with nothing short of the total disappearance of Israel, and the only way the United States could compete for their good will would be by throwing the Israelis over entirely, by consenting in effect to the reconquest of Palestine by the Arabs. Although it is clear that no American government could adopt such a policy, it is equally clear that nothing short of this type of total abandonment of the Israelis is likely to appease the forces unleashed by Arab nationalism. As long as Israel exists, so long will the part played by America in its creation be remembered. America is identified with Israel because, so Arab nationalists think, Israel is a Western country encouraged and sustained by other Western countries, among which the United States is the most powerful. America will continue to be identified with Israel because, in Cairo or Damascus, "American imperialism" provides a convenient alibi for the failure of the Arab countries themselves to destroy their enemy. So powerful and useful a myth is not to be countered with a few diplomatic concessions. The Arabs believe it unlikely that the United States would ever force the Israelis to evacuate Egyptian and Jordanian territory, and this too is taken as evidence that behind the State Department's enticements lurks the unregenerate protector of the Jewish state.

The United States, in short, is stuck with the consequences of Israel's existence just as the British were during the decline of their hegemony in the Middle East. There is a parallel here between Britain's attempts to cut loose from its responsibility for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and America's present effort to improve its image in the Arab world. The British failure to achieve anything useful by such gestures as Sir Anthony Eden's 1955 proposals for Israeli territorial concessions to the Arabs suggests that the United States will not gain much by similar tactics today. Solutions intended to persuade Arab nationalists to moderate their maximum demands really deceive nobody, especially since the Soviet Union is prepared to point out at every turn how much further it is willing to go in the Arab interest.

The second assumption behind the recent

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change in American policy is that movement by the United States toward the Arab (and the Russian) position in the four-power talks at present going on in New York will help to stabilize the local situation, making war less likely and diminishing the risk of a confrontation involving America and Russia. Of course, if the Secretary of State's proposals really were to lead to the conclusion of a peace between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, or even to the imposition of a peace on the combatants by the four powers (France, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States), then this assumption would clearly have been justified. But does anyone expect either of these happy events to take place? The Arab countries, no doubt, desire an Israeli withdrawal from the territories conquered in June 1967, but, whatever individual statesmen may believe in their heart of hearts, no Arab government can afford to pay the price: a sincere recognition of Israel's continued existence as a state. Without such recognition, on the other hand, there is no inducement whatsoever for the Israelis to abandon strategic positions which they have won in battle and which they regard as major cards in their arduous game of poker with Cairo and Damascus.

As for the Russians, they certainly do not want any settlement in the Middle East which would deprive them of their role as the protectors of the Arabs or make it possible for the United States to stage a comeback in the area. Of all the parties directly concerned in the Arab-Israeli dispute only America wants a compromise solution. The Arabs and Israelis each want their own solution—the destruction of Israel or its acceptance as a permanent feature of the landscape. The Russians simply want the dispute to go on and the chasm it has hollowed between the United States and the Arabs to remain unbridged. In these circumstances it seems improbable that Mr. Rogers's proposals will actually bring peace to the Middle East. Even within the State Department they are regarded more as a means of appeasing Arab opinion than as an instrument through which the main problem can be solved.

But if the Middle East policy of the Nixon administration is not going to bring the present (admittedly unsatisfactory) situation to an end, then will it at least lessen the risk of a war, which might come to involve Russia and America, and enhance the stability of the uneasy balance of power which now exists? Roughly speaking, this balance consists, on the one side, of the Arab states supported by Russia and limited in their actions by Israeli military power, but also by a well-founded suspicion on the part of the Russians that when the chips are down the United States will be found backing Israel. On the other side stands Israel, backed to some degree by America, and restrained in its military response to Arab provocation, not so much by the power of the Arabs themselves as by that of their Russian protector. This is an equilibrium which is recognized by all parties, and which found symbolic expression in the meeting at Glassboro between President Johnson and Premier Kosygin after the Six-Day War. It is a balance of power with which all parties are by now familiar—a not unimportant point since political behavior in crises tends to be a matter of conditioned reflexes.

On the basis of these facts it could be argued, contrary to the State Department's position, that should the Russians or Arabs gain the impression that American support of Israel in a crisis might be in doubt, the balance of power would be seriously affected in such a way as actually to increase the chances for renewed hostilities. Furthermore, the United States at present has some influence in Jerusalem which it exerts to moderate the use of Israel's undoubted military superiority. But if it were to become apparent to Israel's leaders that they could not rely on American support in a pinch, then they might be tempted once again to undertake a preventive war—a counsel of despair, no doubt, but better from the Israelis' point of view than waiting while their international position deteriorates and arms become harder and harder to obtain.

Thus the new course set by the Nixon administration does not seem very likely either to restore American influence in the Arab world or to increase peace and stability in the Middle East; with regard to the latter aim, indeed, it might well prove to be counter-productive. It becomes a bit difficult, therefore, to see what it *can* achieve. The motives which have led Mr. Rogers and the State Department to their present policy have been discussed above. They are perfectly clear and quite respectable. It is in its estimate of the freedom of maneuver open to the United States in the Middle East that President Nixon's administration, like other governments before it, has erred. The difficulties and disappointments to which American policy in the Middle East has been and will continue to be subject will not be diminished by taking an unrealistic view of the possibilities. If, as I have suggested, the United States cannot hope to do much about restoring its influence in the Arab world, then it must do what it can to build an alternative policy.

WHAT MIGHT such an alternative policy be? In terms of power politics alone, there are a number of arguments for continuing the policy followed by the Johnson administration during and after the Six-Day War—arguments which have nothing to do with the Jewish vote or even with the emotional ties between Israel and the United States. Some of these arguments have already been mentioned, but it is worth repeating them here in a slightly different form, since, once put together, they add up to a coherent and, it might be claimed, more realistic view of America's role in the Middle East

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than that adopted by the Nixon administration.

1) Whatever concessions the United States may make to Arab nationalist feeling, it cannot carry those concessions to the point of conniving at the destruction of Israel. It will, therefore, always be outbid for Arab affections by the Soviet Union, which operates under no moral or political restraints on this aspect of its policy and is, of course, hostile to Zionism for internal reasons. As for the "conservative" Arab regimes whose life might be made marginally easier by American appeasement of Arab opinion, the chances of their survival offer no firm basis for policy.

2) Support of Israel insures the existence of at least one Middle Eastern country friendly to the United States—a country endowed with a stable and efficient system of democratic government, with a high level of technological capability, and with considerable military strength. From the point of view of power politics, this is not an asset to be despised, especially when the general deterioration of the American position in the Mediterranean is taken into consideration.

3) Support of Israel is essentially an "offshore" operation, one not likely to require the commitment of American troops on Middle Eastern soil. Given the availability of weapons, the Israelis are quite capable of looking after themselves. On the diplomatic side, the United States would also have to hold its own against the Russians, but this should not be more difficult than it was, say, at the time of the Six-Day War. It is worth noting that the one successful American attempt to influence events in the Arab world—the Eisenhower doctrine—did involve the landing of troops in Lebanon. The Eisenhower doctrine was indeed the first occasion on which the United States undertook a generalized responsibility for the stability of a particular area, the first occasion on which the "world policeman" was seen on his beat. A commitment to Israel would be considerably less difficult to maintain.

4) I have already argued that firm American support of Israel, far from increasing international instability, is more likely to lessen it by preserving a local balance which depends essentially on everyone's actions being predictable. It might be added that, in dangerous international situations, the status quo is often preferable to movement. America, in particular, as a status quo power, has more to lose than to gain from a fluid international situation, and the Middle East crisis provides no exception to this rule. It was sound political instinct that led President Johnson, in his speech of June 19, 1967, to emphasize the need for "recognized and secure frontiers" rather than to raise the question of an Israeli withdrawal from the conquered territories—a concession only conceivable within the framework of what now appears to be an unattainable general settlement. Even an unsatisfactory and unjust status quo gives statesmen more to work with than a totally mobile environment. It is not the least disadvantage of Mr. Rogers's new plan that it tends to unsettle the one fixed point in the situation accepted by all parties: the present armistice lines.

No doubt, the existence of Israel and of the Arab-Israeli strife is a stumbling-block in the path of American diplomacy. It would not be too paradoxical to say that, in terms of power politics, the United States has every reason for wishing that Israel had never come into existence, while the Soviet Union has every reason for wishing it to remain as an obstacle to reconciliation between America and the Arabs. Yet Israel is there, and its presence does impose a choice upon American policymakers—a choice which ultimately cannot be evaded by talk of "balanced" policies. This, of course, does not mean that the United States should not counsel the Israelis to moderation in the use of their military power, to generosity and humanity in their relations with the Arabs who live in the occupied territories, and to concern for the Arab refugees. No friend of Israel would wish other advice to be given. But it does mean that America should firmly maintain its commitment to Israel's future and should not call in doubt the solidity of its support by pitching too high its demands for compromise on the part of Israel.

Finally, it was almost certainly not Mr. Rogers's intention to suggest that the Nixon administration is any less committed to the continued *existence* of Israel than was its predecessor. In his message to a conference of American Jewish leaders in January, moreover, the President stated that America does not intend to "impose the terms of peace"; and, after all, Israel is also getting delivery of fifty Phantoms and may get more now that France has sold Mirages to Libya. If, however, the Nixon policy for the Middle East does not herald any fundamental change, it is difficult to see what point there was in putting it forward. If, on the other hand, it does imply an alteration large enough to have an impact on the situation, then it is easy to see why the Israelis are worried. But perhaps neither of these interpretations is wholly true. It can more accurately be said that there has been a real change in American policy, but that the facts of the situation will continue recalcitrant in their refusal to fall into the patterns desired by the State Department. This is not precisely a flattering verdict on a carefully planned exercise in diplomacy, but it is one that has often fallen on the efforts of other countries to cope with the problems of the Middle East. In failing to solve those problems America will simply be joining the majority of those who have had anything to do with the area. It remains, however, a matter of some concern that abortive plans, conceived without sufficient re-

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gard for brute fact, should not be allowed to make matters worse than they already are.

* * *

POSTSCRIPT: From mid-January, when the preceding pages were written, to early February, evidence of indecision within the administration continued to present itself. A report in the New York *Times* that Israel would be allowed to purchase 25 more Phantoms and 80 Skyhawk fighters was instantly pooh-poohed by the State Department. After a meeting in Cairo of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and the Sudan, the United States was implicitly warned that further military aid to Israel might endanger the position of American oil companies in the Middle East, while the Russians, for their part, mustered to the side of their Arab clients with a letter from Premier Kosygin to President Nixon, President Pompidou, and Prime Minister Wilson; this letter hinted strongly that, should more American arms be promised for delivery to Israel, the Soviets stood ready in turn to supply Egypt with the new MIG-23 fighters. In the meantime, President Nixon had more or less reaffirmed the Secretary of State's "balanced policy" by declaring at his press conference of January 30: "We are neither pro-Arab nor pro-Israel. We are pro-peace"—a statement a good deal more enigmatic than that of the British Foreign Officer quoted above.

All these developments, however, still leave unanswered the question asked at the beginning of this article: "To what degree has the Nixon administration changed American policy in the Middle East?" Strong overtones of in-fighting can now be discerned among different branches of the government, with the State Department stressing the concrete American interests in the area (above all, oil), and the White House displaying a greater consciousness of the domestic political implications of its position toward Israel; perhaps, after all, President Nixon has not despaired of the New York vote. But he must now also be aware that the Russians have put themselves publicly in the position of having to reply in kind to new American deliveries of aircraft to Israel. In the event, much will depend on how far Moscow is willing to go toward involving itself in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. Providing Egypt with MIG-23's would be a striking gesture, but one with few practical consequences unless pilots were supplied as well—a move that would bring the Soviet Union into the front line of the Arab-Israeli conflict and would risk precipitating a sharp crisis in relations with the United States.

Under the present circumstances, it is, in my opinion, more important than ever that American policy should not show any indecision in its support of Israel. Should the Nixon administration decide, as a result of the threats implicit in Premier Kosygin's note, not to send further aircraft to Israel, then the Israelis might reasonably draw the conclusion that the Soviet Union possesses a right of veto over the supply of advanced weapons from their one remaining source. And in that case, what would remain but the policy of despair—to provoke a military confrontation as soon as possible? If, on the other hand, the aircraft are promised for delivery, it is more likely that the Soviet Union will refrain from direct military involvement (i.e., sending pilots and technicians with the MIG-23's), especially if it should be made clear that such involvement would bring about a sharp American reaction. At this level of international crisis, American oil interests in Arab countries and even Mr. Rogers's conversations with Moroccan or Tunisian leaders are of secondary importance. President Nixon's declaration of impartiality solves nothing, and it certainly will not prevent the United States from having to make an eventual choice. In the final analysis, as I have already noted, that choice will in any case be assumed by the Arabs to be pro-Israel. The Soviet Union, in addition, is evidently convinced that there is now a sporting chance that America will accept the imbalance in the Middle East already brought about by the French sale of Mirages to Libya; the possible consequences of such an attitude are unpleasant to contemplate. At the time of the Six-Day War, Russia hesitated to intervene directly in the Arab-Israeli struggle, and its hesitation was in large measure traceable to the firm position adopted by the United States. A similar clarity of policy today is the only course likely to prevent further escalation in the Middle East.

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Intermarriage & Jewish Survival

Marshall Sklare

THE AMERICAN JEWISH community is a kind of fabulous invalid whose death had long ago been predicted by the doctors in attendance but whose ongoing salubrity confounds their predictions. Contradictions, as is the case with any living organism, abound. American Jewry may be inordinately "problem"-ridden and "crisis"-beset, but its institutions, with all their attendant activities, continue to thrive. New synagogues and community centers are constantly being built, and support for Israel, financial and otherwise, remains undiminished. Enrollment in Jewish day schools shows a steady growth, and while some would dismiss this as merely a response to the deterioration of the public schools, a more positive consideration is certainly at work as well. Even the grave problem of the loss of Jewish identity among college youth is not entirely a one-sided proposition. There is a new enthusiasm for Jewish studies on the campus and it is now harder to find suitable instructors than it is to attract interested students. As for extracurricular activities, the Hillel Foundation—no longer the sole Jewish address on campus—must now compete with such organizations as Yavneh (Orthodox) and Atid (Conservative). The latest campus phenomenon, of course, are the groups dedicated to challenging the Jewish Establishment, of which the best known, thanks to its recent demonstration in Boston at a convention of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, is the Jewish Activist League.

But whatever significance one may attach to these developments, they are overshadowed by one persistent trend: the ever-increasing incidence of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. It is intermarriage which weighs more heavily than all the positive trends combined, and which calls into question the "creative survival," as the phrase has it, of the American Jewish community. That this should be so is hardly surprising, since intermarriage strikes at the very core of Jewish group existence.

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What precisely is the current incidence of intermarriage? This is no easy matter to determine. Official statistics are available only for Iowa and Indiana, the two jurisdictions which ask for religion in their marriage forms; but these states have small Jewish populations which are not representative of the nation at large. The privately-conducted Jewish community surveys which have been done in some communities are a better statistical source, though such surveys have generally been confined to cities with small or middle-size Jewish populations. Unfortunately, most of these studies indicate only a cumulative rate—that is, they tell us the ratio of the intermarried to inmarried but give no figure for the current rate. Furthermore, since it is safe to assume that the intermarried are more marginal to the Jewish community than the inmarried, it is reasonable to conclude that such privately-conducted surveys underestimate the true extent of intermarriage. Finally, conclusions about the incidence of intermarriage depend to a large extent upon which survey one chooses. For example, a 1958 study of San Francisco uncovered an 18.5 per cent cumulative intermarriage rate while a 1963 survey of Providence, Rhode Island indicated a 2.6 per cent rate. The two communities apparently represent opposite ends of the intermarriage spectrum.

Perhaps the best guide to the current intermarriage situation is a 1965 survey of Boston. With 185,000 Jewish residents Boston has a larger Jewish population than many other cities which have been surveyed, and the temper of its Jewish life approximates that of the giant communities where the majority of American Jews live. Boston also has a balance of old and new Jewish families, with individuals of diverse educational attainment and differing levels of sophistication, and while the city's educational and research institutions may seem to attract intermarried couples, on the other hand its well-organized Jewish community draws those who are interested in intensive Jewish living.

The Boston study reveals a cumulative rate of 7 per cent. The current rate, however, may be more closely approximated through a revealing cross-tabulation of the religious composition of

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married couples by age of the husband. Thus we find that in cases of couples where the husband is age fifty-one and over, the incidence of intermarriage is reported at 3 per cent; ages thirty-one to fifty, 7 per cent; thirty and younger, 20 per cent. Since the marriage-formation rate is highest in the last of these groups, it is possible to estimate the current figure for intermarriage at close to 20 per cent. The statistical impressiveness of this figure —one in five—becomes even more significant when we consider the added fact that the younger the couple at the time of marriage, the greater the likelihood of their having children. It is the marital pattern of the young, then, which is determinative; not only do they marry in greater numbers than their elders, but they have a greater impact on the demographic future of the Jewish community. Furthermore, they wield an influence by example on their younger, soon-to-marry siblings and cousins. It is even possible that the marital style of those thirty and under may exert a subtle pull on their elders who are seeking to remarry after divorce or the death of a spouse.

If by 1965 one in five younger Jewish couples in Boston constituted a case of intermarriage, we can safely assume that the figure is now approaching one in four. And if this is true in so conservative a city as Boston, it must mean that intermarriage has reached large-scale proportions throughout the country as a whole. Yet, despite the gravity of the problem, the Jewish community, at any rate on the official level, has devoted little attention to the matter. Indeed, the first symposium on intermarriage sponsored by a major national Jewish organization was published only as late as 1963 (*Intermarriage and Jewish Life*, edited by Werner J. Cahnman). During the same year the *American Jewish Year Book*, the standard reference work in the field, carried *its* first article on intermarriage. (In its sixty-three previous volumes, the *Year Book* discussed the matter only once, and briefly at that, in a scant two pages.) As in other areas, it was left to a non-Jewish source to take the lead, in this instance *Look* magazine, whose famous 1964 article on the subject, somewhat flamboyantly titled "The Vanishing American Jew," stimulated a discussion that still resounds today.*

WHY DID the American Jewish community resist confronting the issue for so long? The answer rests in the peculiar dilemmas which intermarriage poses, and which, until the matter could no longer be avoided, inhibited public discussion. To begin with, the vast majority of American Jews, in a radical departure from the traditions of their matchmaking forebears, enthusiastically subscribe to the idea of romantic love as the basis for marriage: the final determination of a mate is the prerogative of the child rather than the parent. Obviously, there are no problems when a Jewish boy and a Jewish girl fall in love and decide to marry; the parents are only affirmed in their romantic bias and, there being no other objections to the match, can give it their wholehearted blessings. However, should it be a question of a Jewish boy and Gentile girl (or vice versa), the value of romantic love collides with the values of endogamy and Jewish survival. And should the parents seek to break up the match, they must in effect ask the young people to fall *out* of love, to renounce values they themselves have celebrated and inculcated.

Intermarriage tends to stir up another, perhaps more fundamental conflict, this an effect of the liberal views which American Jews hold generally on social as well as political issues. For whatever reason—whether prompted by traditional moral values or by their self-interest as a minority —American Jews are strong believers in the American creed of equality for all people "regardless of race or religion." This conviction, of course, clashes with an equally forceful ethnocentric impulse, but, for the most part, American Jews live comfortably with such contradictions, particularly if their children continue to marry within the faith. The moment a question of intermarriage arises, however, these contradictions between the belief in romantic love and equality, on the one side, and the ethnocentric impulse, on the other, force themselves painfully to the surface. And the issue is further complicated by the fact that so many American Jewish parents, lacking the requisite spiritual commitments, are in no position to offer *religious* objections to a mixed marriage.

Moreover, as strongly as American Jews may oppose intermarriage, many are dimly aware that such unions after all represent the logical culmination of the quest for full equality. For widespread intermarriage can be seen to mark the end of all those discriminatory practices which preserve social distance between the Jew and the larger community, which restrict opportunity, and which still leave the Jew with a feeling of lingering inferiority. Yet the fact remains that widespread intermarriage must also inevitably raise doubts regarding the basic premise of Jewish life —that creative Jewish survival *is* possible in a free society (which has been almost an article of faith to the American Jew, except for a small Orthodox minority).

Given so many clashing commitments and opposing values, it is no wonder that the Jewish community was reluctant to examine the issue of intermarriage until its increasing incidence made open scrutiny unavoidable.

* The latest book-length study of the subject is by Louis A. Berman, a psychologist at the University of Illinois (Chicago campus). Entitled *Jews and Intermarriage: A Study in Personality and Culture* (Thomas Yoseloff, 707 pp., $12.00), it is a wide-ranging investigation which includes exhaustive footnotes and a comprehensive bibliography which will be of great assistance to future investigators.

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THE QUESTION of intermarriage, to be sure, is not one that the Jewish community alone confronts; it is a concern shared by all minorities in the United States—at least all those who care about group survival. For such groups, intermarriage is a palpable threat, one that is felt on a collective as well as an individual basis. On the group level, it poses the obvious dangers of physical attrition; in its individual aspects, it threatens the continuity of generations within the family, the ability of family members to identify with one another, and their satisfaction with family roles.

Since American Jewry is by and large survivalist in temper, all these conditions obtain, but with variations which derive from the specific Jewish situation. The most critical relates to group size. American Jewry may be the largest Jewish community in the world, but American Jews number fewer than six million in a total population of over two hundred million; their birth-rate is lower than that of the Protestants, and considerably lower than that of the Catholics. To put the case baldly, there is no surplus Jewish population to cushion the impact of mixed marriage. For while there is still a chance that the Jewish partner in a marriage will not be lost to the group, the odds are slim that the children of the union will remain within the Jewish fold.

But even more significant is the fact that when intermarriage reaches a certain frequency it creates a measure of approval for itself. While it may still be considered somewhat unconventional, the impression is fostered that intermarriage is the inevitable wave of the future. And if intermarriage is to be regarded in this light, then individuals may find themselves under a self-generated pressure to redefine the issue from that of combatting intermarriage to that of accommodating to it. Evidence is accumulating that the most highly acculturated elements of American Jewry are now engaged in making just such a redefinition. Their pattern of accommodation has implications which strike at the very nature of Jewish identity in the modern world.

This new trend toward accommodation may be observed in any upper- or upper-middle-class neighborhood. A good example is Lakeville, the fictional name of a Midwestern suburb noted for the high level of sophistication and acculturation of its Jewish residents. Lakeville was the object of intensive investigation in 1957-1958*; ten years later, in 1968, a selected group of the original respondents was again interviewed, with intermarriage among the subjects of inquiry.

All those queried were convinced that the intermarriage rate had risen sharply in Lakeville and that the practice was more widespread than it had been ten years earlier. This conviction was based not on intuition or hearsay but on direct personal experience. There was scarcely a family in the group that did not have a Gentile son- or daughter-in-law, or a nephew, niece, or cousin married to a non-Jew. Some unusual evidence of the extent of intermarriage was provided by one respondent—admittedly an extreme case—who had developed his own private intermarriage poll, based on the wedding invitations he and his wife received from Jewish relatives and friends: in only 50 per cent of the invitations were both bride and groom Jewish. (He called the slitting open of the envelope "the moment of truth.") As for attitudes toward intermarriage, they run the gamut from full approval to outright disapproval. But even those who fall into the latter category are "soft" on the issue: though they tell their children that they will not accept such a marriage, they admitted when pressed that they were not prepared to face an estrangement between themselves and their children over intermarriage.

Jewish parents in present-day Lakeville, those with young children at any rate, still make some of the same attempts as were common in the past to head off the chance of exogamous unions on the part of their offspring. Almost without exception they send their children to the religious schools of the local synagogues (Lakeville is predominantly Reform), hoping that Jewish education, even in the form of Sunday schools, will produce Jewish commitment; and they place great stock in Confirmation, as well as in Bar and Bat Mitzvah—those adolescent *rites de passage* which have become so significant a part of American Jewish life.

A decade ago parents found it useful to follow up such educational endeavors with discussions with their maturing youngsters which stressed what, in our earlier study, we called the "discord approach." This consisted, essentially, of mental-health arguments, which emphasized the point that the marital relationship is fraught with enough difficulties without introducing yet another potential disharmony, such as a mate of a different faith. Enlightened people, it was conceded, have the right to freedom of marital choice, but wisdom dictates that the choice be a fellow Jew, for the wages of intermarriage are unhappiness. Advocacy of the view that exogamy would result in marital pathology was a safe way of expressing the desire for Jewish survival while at the same time avoiding the appearance of ethnocentrism. Our latest interviews, however, reveal that there is a growing sense of unreality about the "discord approach." Nor could it be otherwise. Not only is intermarriage an everyday occurrence in present-day Lakeville, but so too is the reality of *successful* intermarriage. Furthermore, every child in the community has exam-

* See Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier,* Basic Books, 1967.

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ples available to him of inmarriages which are not doing all that well.

WHATEVER THE reality behind the "discord approach" even a decade ago, its use suggested a determined effort to combat intermarriage and a belief that the battle against intermarriage could be won (though, to be sure, with inevitable casualties). The most striking change in present-day Lakeville is the erosion of confidence—particularly among the more acculturated Reform Jews—in that belief. This is why the struggle is now viewed not as a matter of prevention but increasingly, on the part of the parent, as a matter of accommodation to the inevitable. In fact, one encounters parents who are more concerned about themselves than about their children. Their concern centers around how they will act should one of their children present them with an incipient case of intermarriage.

The key phrase here is "to act intelligently," that is, not lapse into hysterics but place reason before emotion and judge the prospective son- or daughter-in-law by the same standards one would use if he or she were Jewish. Most Lakeville parents today are agreed that under no circumstances must they set up a situation which will alienate them from their children, not even under the provocation of an intermarriage; and they look to their own mental wellbeing as well as their children's. One woman respondent, for example, related how her sister had worked herself into such a state of frenzy over a daughter's intermarriage that she required psychiatric treatment. Appalled by her sister's behavior, she resolved that should she ever find herself in a similar situation she would act differently. Fate soon presented her with the opportunity—a Gentile son-in-law of her own—and she passed the test with flying colors.

But when all is said and done, when all the accommodations have been made and all the social realities accepted, how is the parent to handle that most unsettling of all factors, the blow to his self-esteem? For after all, a child who marries out of the faith appears to be telling the parent that he has not succeeded in forging a close enough psychic identification between himself and his child to insure that the latter will choose a mate of identical background, thus reproducing the parents' own marriage. Inasmuch as it is not easy to admit to failure as a parent, the following responses are now commonly encountered in Lakeville.

The first might be described as the guilt-shifting ploy. Here the burden of responsibility, instead of being shouldered by the parents, is laid at the door of the synagogue, whose spiritual leaders and educators have clearly failed in *their* tasks ("If only the Sunday School teachers had been more competent." "If only the rabbi had been more inspiring."). The psychological mechanism, of course, is familiar and requires little further elaboration.

The second response, whose roots can also be traced to parental guilt and to damaged self-esteem, takes the form of trying to make the best of an unfortunate situation by somehow legitimating the marriage. For the parents of Lakeville this means that the ceremony must be performed by a rabbi.* It is not that they question the validity, legal or otherwise, of a civil wedding (heretofore the traditional recourse for mixed couples), but in the new Lakeville there are certain urgent psychological (as well as social) requirements that only a religious ceremony, with a rabbi in attendance, can satisfy. In general, the son or daughter about to embark on the intermarriage is inclined to go along with the parents.†

This, however, is by no means the end of the story. As the parents soon discover, it is not all that simple to find a rabbi who will do the job, even in permissive Lakeville. Indeed, it turns out that the rabbis of all of the four Reform congregations which serve the community refuse to officiate at mixed weddings. Many highly acculturated Jews in Lakeville consider their behavior outrageous, as indicated by the heat, passion, and dismay which characterize their comments on the matter: "The rabbis don't hesitate to officiate at a marriage between a Jewish boy and a Jewish girl in which the boy may be of the lowest character, or the girl a tramp. By what right then do they refuse to officiate at a marriage where the Gentile fulfills the highest aspiration of the Jewish moral code?" Not only are the rabbis accused of lack of ethical sensitivity, but it is even charged that they are uninterested in Jewish survival: "If the rabbis are truly interested in preserving Jewish religion, they should welcome mixed couples. By sending them away the rabbis close the door to their eventual conversion or to their raising the children as Jews." And one respondent even maintained that the reason for the rabbis' refusal was the fear of "getting into trouble" with their colleagues in the "rabbis' union."

But a genuine need finds its proper satisfaction:

* A Reform rabbi, that is. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis will not officiate at mixed weddings. Neither will most Reform rabbis, as we shall see; but in the case of the Orthodox and Conservative rabbis, the abstention is based on an overall adherence to the corpus of Jewish religious law. Reform rabbis do not feel themselves under the same obligations.

† One would expect that the parents of the Gentile partner would object to a Jewish religious ceremony and hold out for either a civil ceremony or even a church wedding. But surprisingly enough (and this can be taken as an index of some sort to the changes that have occurred in American society), in many instances the wishes of the Jewish parents are respected. The non-Jewish bride or groom may even be enthusiastic about the idea, regarding the rabbi's blessing of the union as conferring special distinction.

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if the four "bad" rabbis of Lakeville will not perform the marriage, there is a "good" Reform rabbi serving a neighboring suburb who will. This rabbi, who comes to the rescue of distraught parents, and who, according to one of the respondents, does "a land-office business," is as competent as his more traditional-minded colleagues. To the uninstructed, he may appear suspect. One Lakeville matron who was forced to seek out his services was afraid he would turn out to be a "second-class" rabbi with dubious credentials; she was delighted to discover that he could perform as impressive a ceremony as the rabbis she knew in Lakeville. Because of the decision of this rabbi, the good life in Lakeville includes the phenomenon of intermarriage with rabbinical sanction.

III

THE FIRST known instance of a rabbi officiating at a marriage between a Jew and a Gentile—the groom was Jewish and the bride Christian—took place in Leipzig in 1849. The rabbi was Samuel Holdheim, one of the founders of Reform Judaism in Germany, and his wedding sermon on that landmark occasion is worth noting, underscoring as it does the attraction which the idea of intermarriage has exerted for Jews in the modern age.

Intermarriage, according to Holdheim, a staunch universalist in the best 19th-century tradition, is the "ideal marriage," an expression of man's noblest spiritual impulses. When two young people of different faiths plight their troth, they do nothing less than affirm that we are all children of the "one Father who created us all"; this represents the true religion, and the young couple its highest exemplars. Holdheim went on to take issue with the "discord approach" (which even then, apparently, was used to discourage intermarriages), maintaining that those who would believe that intermarriages run the risk of marital disharmony only show their small faith in the redeeming power of love: "Men misconstrue the omnipotence of love and consider love only a weak twig which must be bound to the pole of faith in order to resist the winds and storms of life. . . . However, love, as the highest moral force, stands by itself, entirely alone, and does not require a common faith for its support." Clearly Holdheim regarded intermarriage as the wave of the future, as the harbinger of a better world, where Jew and Gentile, quite literally, would lie down together, very much like the lamb and the lion in Isaiah's eschatological vision of togetherness, a world where tolerance and mutual understanding would replace the antagonisms engendered by separatism. A world, in short, where the Jew might prosper.

Intermarriage might be all that Holdheim claimed for it—and other Reform rabbis of the period and after shared his optimism—but there still remained the nagging question of the survival of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion. Even Reform rabbis who desired the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God realized that intermarriage must invariably lead to Jewish dissolution. It was this awareness which prevented Reform from an outright endorsement of intermarriage and which prompted the famous statement of David Einhorn, a leading American 19th-century Reform rabbi and no less a proponent of Classical Reform than Holdheim: "Each intermarriage drives a nail in the coffin of Judaism." In 1909, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the association of Reform rabbis (or the "rabbis' union," as our disgruntled respondent called it), passed a resolution on the controversial subject which has stood to the present day: ". . . [intermarriages] are contrary to the Jewish tradition and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate." The vagueness of the term "discouraged" satisfied both the pro- and anti-intermarriage factions since it could be interpreted to mean all things to all Reform rabbis. On the one hand, the resolution went on record as voicing the collective objection to intermarriage; on the other hand, since it merely "discouraged" but did not proscribe, it left room for each rabbi to decide for himself what course to follow. Moreover, the imprecision of the wording made it possible for the rabbis who performed intermarriages to set conditions of their own devising, should they so choose, e.g., exacting a promise from the couple that they would raise their children as Jews, or that the non-Jewish partner would convert to Judasim at a later date. Nor did the resolution prevent those more traditionally-minded rabbis from making an exception to their no-intermarriage rule when they felt that circumstances warranted it.

This permissiveness notwithstanding, the majority of Reform rabbis were not inclined to officiate at mixed weddings. Reluctance increased during the 30's and 40's when Classical Reform, with its sweeping universalistic emphasis, so at variance with the events of the day, came under wide attack and the position generally called Neo-Reform grew in strength. Neo-Reform, more traditionalist in outlook, advocated a strengthening of ties with the larger Jewish community which, at least with respect to marriage, observed Jewish religious law. Some Reform rabbis continued to perform intermarriages, but the practice fell into disrepute.

Until recently it all worked out reasonably well. There was, we might say, an "arrangement." The majority of the CCAR membership, with the approval of the Reform laity, stuck by their guns in refusing to officiate at intermarriages, but when approached to do so, a Reform rabbi could always refer the applicants to a colleague who had no compunctions in the matter. He might not always approve of his more "liberal" colleague's ac-

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tion, yet he rarely hesitated to make the referral; it was a way of getting off the hook and of pleasing everybody. As for the rabbis who performed these marriages, they tacitly accepted their deviant status, but continued to do what they felt they had to. The system worked to everyone's satisfaction and even grew to include Reform laymen who were part of the referral grapevine.

So long as it all stayed within reasonable bounds, statistically speaking, and so long as the parties involved acknowledged intermarriage as deviant, the larger Jewish community could afford to look aside. If some rabbis were performing marriages which had no standing in Jewish religious law, well, that was *their* responsibility; so long as the Jewish collectivity was not being made to suffer unduly, there was no need to take action. And if some couples thought that their marriages were Jewishly valid and considered their children Jewish (in cases where the wife was Gentile*), well, they were simply mistaken. Every now and then the lapses permitted by Reform were taken to task by Orthodox and Conservative spokesmen; however, the CCAR resolution was always on hand to silence the critics. Periodically, an Orthodox rabbi would propose the establishment of a Jewish family register so that there would be no ambiguity about who was Jewish and who not, but the idea was never taken up. By and large, a kind of status quo prevailed.

IV

BUT THIS state of affairs was not to last. The increase in the incidence of intermarriage has brought with it an increase in the number of Jewish parents who want a Jewish ceremony for their intermarrying child. Hence the increase in the number of interfaith couples seeking the services of a rabbi, and a consequent increase in the number of "intermarrying" rabbis. Furthermore, these rabbis are no longer content to remain underground, as it were. Aware of the changing attitudes of their congregants, they have grown more aggressive, refusing to concede any rabbinic inferiority. Indeed, they maintain that by their conduct they are actually fulfilling a higher rabbinic function than their tradition-minded colleagues, since their cooperation tends to "save" couples who might otherwise turn away from the Jewish community; nor, as alleged, is it they who are responsible for spreading assimilation but their opposites, who by their intransigence drive many Jews away from Judaism. The rabbinic crossfire has grown so heavy in some instances that it is not unusual to find the permissive contingent accusing the stricter faction of "insincerity" and "hypocrisy," of donning a false cloak of respectability ("If our colleagues really disagree with us, then why do they continue to make referrals?"; and more bitterly: "Why do they expect *us* to wash their dirty linen for them?").

The effect of all this has been the emergence of an effort to affirm the bona fides of the rabbis who perform intermarriages; the effort has been spearheaded by David Max Eichhorn, a retired Reform rabbi who spent most of his active career as an official of the National Jewish Welfare Board, where he was connected with the military chaplaincy. Eichhorn had been widely known in earlier years as a proponent of the view that Judaism should engage in a more active program of proselytizing among non-Jews. Recently, however, he has shifted his energies from the cause of conversion to the legitimation of intermarriage.

Eichhorn opened his campaign by polling the approximately 1,000 members of the CCAR on whether or not they officiate at mixed weddings. There were eighty-nine affirmative replies. To this number Eichhorn added the names of twenty or so who had not bothered to answer but of whose position he knew, and he concluded that: " . . . one may say with assurance that well over 100 members of the CCAR are officiating at interfaith marriages without requiring conversion." His next step was to write to the rabbis in question, requesting permission to include their names on a "list of rabbis who officiate at intermarriages, with the clear understanding that this list may be given . . . to anyone else who needs it." The avowed purpose of all this was "[to] combat the defection of many of our people who are being lost to Judaism because of the spiritual insensibility of so many of our colleagues." The register is now available, though it includes fewer names than Eichhorn had hoped; apparently not every "intermarrying" rabbi, not even in an age where confession has become a way of life, is ready to proclaim himself to the world at large.

Undoubtedly, the list will have some utility, and Eichhorn's concern over "defections" is unquestionably sincere; but, as we have seen, it was never really difficult to find a rabbi to provide the particular service. The reason for the publication of the list therefore cuts deeper and clearly has to do with a bid for open acceptance by a significant segment of the Reform rabbinate who no longer want to be thought of as a species of rabbinical abortionists.

The most recent development in the continuing drama took place in Miami Beach last October, at the biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the congregational arm of Reform Judaism. Although it received no press attention, an entire session of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of wheth-

* In Jewish law only the child of a Jewish *mother* is regarded as Jewish. The child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother must convert in order to be recognized as a Jew in the eyes of Jewish law. The current controversy in Israel over "who is a Jew" revolves in part around these legal requirements.

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er or not Reform should reverse the stand against performing intermarriages adopted by the CCAR in 1909.

Presenting the case for the "traditionalists" was Rabbi Joseph Klein of Worcester, Massachusetts. Rabbi Klein began by saying that while he was a *Reform* rabbi, and thus under no obligation to observe all the minutiae of Jewish law, when it came to performing marriages he was a *rabbi*, charged with the responsibility for maintaining the unity of the Jewish people. He was therefore obliged to follow the basic requirements of the "law of Moses and Israel," as the traditional wedding formula has it, which precludes marriage of a Jew and a non-Jew. "If I abrogate these laws and proceed to perform intermarriages," he asked the assembly, "in what way am I different from a minister or a civil official?" He went on to state that his attitudes had never created any difficulties with his congregants, neither with parents who sought his services when a child was about to intermarry nor with the young couple themselves. Perturbed though they might be at first, almost invariably they came around to an understanding of his point of view. Finally, rebutting the "defection" argument, Rabbi Klein denied that his particular practice drove young people away from Judaism; after all, in the majority of cases it was not the interfaith couple who were eager for his presence but the parents of the Jewish partner.

REPRESENTING THE proponents of legitimation—among whom is UAHC President Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath—was Rabbi Abraham Klausner of Yonkers, New York. (His name, incidentally, is not to be found in the Eichhorn register, but that, as he indicated, is only because he is already performing more intermarriages than he can handle; publicity would only make matters worse.) Rabbi Klausner built his case essentially around the you-can't-serve-two-masters theme: Reform Judaism, he argued, was, to its detriment, looking to have it both ways. On the one hand, it espoused the ideals of liberalism and egalitarianism; on the other, it discouraged its rabbis from officiating at intermarriages. How, he wondered, could Reform balance its espousal of the American creed of equality for all with a policy of exclusion that maintained, in effect, that a Gentile was not maritally acceptable? The inconsistency—intellectually and morally reprehensible—must be rectified, and Reform Judaism must therefore not only adjust its logic but return to its original universalist inspiration. (As Rabbi Klausner put it: "Reform believes that from every tree you may eat.") In the matter at hand, the alternatives before Reform Judaism were clear: either to sink back into the ghetto—unthinkable prospect!—or to legitimate the rabbis' role at intermarriages.

As Rabbi Klausner developed his argument, it became evident that an important Reform strategy heretofore closely tied up with intermarriage—conversion to Judaism of the Gentile partner—was also being subjected to serious reconsideration. Apparently the new school of "intermarrying" rabbis regards conversion as passé. The inference which Klausner left was that he does not bother to urge, or even discuss, conversion with the Gentile partner. The most that he would concede was that conversion had the advantage of introducing religious unity in the household—it would prevent children from being pulled in opposite directions during their formative years. If conversion had any significance, then, it was in the area of promoting better mental health rather than better religion.

In presenting his view of conversion, Klausner conceded that there is such a thing as "true" conversion, which is the result of only the most rigorous intellectual and emotional re-education; but this in his view has nothing to do with the conversions-for-marriage which Reform rabbis perform by the thousands each year. He arrived at the conclusion that the Reform movement, with its liberal policy toward conversion, has been practicing self-deception: in his view, the great majority of the marriages which Reform rabbis have performed between Jews and converted Gentiles are still intermarriages. If Reform Jews were really sincere about conversion, he suggested, they would set sharply higher standards. Klausner was of course aware that any such policy would drastically reduce the number of converts and this apparently was one of the things he was after. In fact, in his condemnation of Reform's liberalism Klausner sounded like nothing so much as the most rigid member of a right-wing Orthodox rabbinical court, as for example the Beth Din of London which is noted for making conversion an exceedingly difficult process. The reason for this irony is clear: if intermarriage is to be legitimated, then the value of the present-day conversion process must be downgraded; at the very least, it must be looked upon as an exercise in futility. Furthermore, if most conversions are a fake, then the rabbi who requires conversion is no better, morally speaking (indeed he is worse), than his colleague who just goes ahead and marries the couple.

But something even deeper was at issue. Conversion, after all, is based on the idea of the superiority of the converting religion. Many of the Classical Reformers had in fact believed in the superiority of Judaism and in the uniqueness of a Jewish mission. As already noted, even when they did not insist upon conversion they frequently attached conditions to the performance of an intermarriage—for example, that the Gentile partner agree that the children be reared as Jews. To Klausner this constituted sheer arrogance: in an ecumenical age, he asked, how dare a religion make such demands; what a tragic

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error it would be for Judaism to assert its superiority at a time when even Catholicism was in the process of moderating its own claims to religious preeminence and of seeking to accommodate itself to the modern world.

Rabbi Klausner concluded his presentation with the thought that the least Reform Judaism could do if it were to retain the goodwill and respect of its adherents and not degenerate into a fossil was to revoke all pronouncements discouraging the rabbinical performance of intermarriage. A resolution to that effect was promptly introduced from the floor and a lively discussion ensued, from which it became evident that the motion enjoyed wide support among those who were in attendance. Apparently taken aback by this unexpected development, the chairman announced that the session had been intended for educational purposes only and ruled the motion out of order.

THERE THE issue rests, but not, it is safe to predict, for long. The implications for the Jewish future of such an accommodation to intermarriage are too momentous to remain a matter of mere "sectarian" interest, of concern only to Reform Jews or to individuals contemplating intermarriage. The Jewish community as a whole is soon bound to find itself embroiled in a bitter debate over what this new development portends for its survival as a distinctive group.

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#3 In a series

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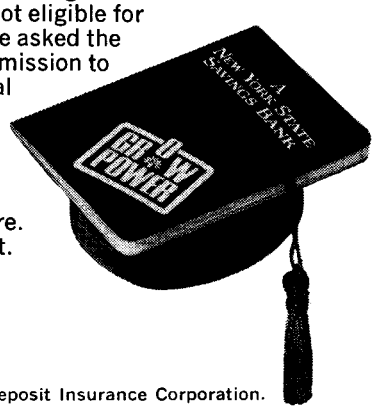

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Literary Gangsters

Gore Vidal

On a rare visit to the theater in the early 60's (visits have been equally rare in other decades), I opened *Playbill,* a throwaway magazine given me by an usher, and saw my own name; then "Golden Age of Television"; then "Chayefsky." I was startled. A half-dozen years had passed since live television drama ended. Why bring up the subject now? And in *Playbill*? I read on. The tone of the piece was shrill, and the substance altogether too familiar. Apparently the television playwrights had not —oh, God, it's that piece again! —been *good.* The writer did not offer much evidence one way or the other, but then did anyone ever see the three thousand or so plays that were done in those years? Better to dismiss the whole lot as *kitsch,* and with a sneer refer to me, in particular, as "a culture hero of the 50's." Moss creeping up once heroic limbs, I looked to see who cared so little for television's twenty-one-inch dramatic Renaissance. Richard Gilman. The name —if not the style—was new to me.

Recently I spent an evening with several other culture heroes, current and past (wherever we meet, there is the Pantheon), and we got onto the subject of literary gangsters. Since the invention of printing, there has been a need for people to write more or less to order for the press. Some of these professionals have been good, some have been bad, and a sizable minority have been gangsters: hit-and-run journalists, without conscience, forced to live precariously by their wits, and those wits are increasingly strained nowadays because there are fewer places to publish in than there used to be, which means a lot more edgy hoods hanging about the playgrounds of the West Side.

The literary gangster's initial problem is a poignant one: how to be noticed? How to occupy a turf of one's own? Having been for a quarter-century an observer of the scene, with a particular interest in literary crime—to use that well-loved New York *Times Book Review* phrase—I would suggest, right off, that the apprentice criminal write the following on the lid of his typewriter: today's reader is not interested in analysis but opinion, preferably harsh and unexpected. Some years ago a classic caper began with the statement that although Bernard Shaw was a bad playwright, a few pages of his music criticism were not without value. This caused interest. It was also a splendid heist because no attempt was made to prove a case. An opinion was stated loudly, and contrary evidence was ignored. The young apprentice should also feel free to invent sources and quotations on the ground that readers of even the most high-minded journals know very little about anything, particularly the past. Needless to say, the more violent and *ad hominem* the style, the more grateful his readers will be. Americans like to be told whom to hate. Finally, the gangster can never go wrong if, while appearing to uphold the highest standards (but never define those standards or say just when it was that the theater, for instance, was "relevant"), he attacks indiscriminately the artists of the day, the popular on the ground that to give pleasure to the many is a sign of corruption and the much admired on the ground that since all values now held by the society are false (for obvious reasons don't present alternative values), any culture hero must reflect perfectly the folly of those who worship him. It is not wise to praise anyone living; unhappily, every now and then, it may be necessary to *appear* to like something done by a contemporary, in which case select a foreign writer like Borges; he is old, admired abroad, and his works are short enough actually to read. In a few years, he can always be dismissed as a culture hero of the "Silly Sixties." Remember that turnover is now as rapid in literary reputations as it is in women's dresses. So keep moving, and if occasionally you contradict yourself, no one will notice since no one is keeping score.

Was it ever thus? Yes, since antiquity or at least since newspapers. On 20 February 1767 Voltaire wrote a friend, "The infamous trade of vilifying one's colleagues to earn a little money should be left to cheap journalists. . . . It is those wretches who have made of literature an arena for gladiators."

Gladiators, cheap journalists, gangsters, they are always with us. To the heroes of the 40's, John W. Aldridge, Jr. was the first gangster to appear on the scene, and a source of wonder to us all. In 1947 he set himself up as—we thought—a legitimate literary businessman, opening shop with a piece describing the postwar generation of writers in which he warmly praised John Horne Burns and myself. The praise made us think he was not a hood, his shop a legitimate business not a front. Little did we suspect that Mr. Aldridge was a master literary criminal who wanted to contribute not simply a modest footnote to each of our sagas but a terrible full chapter. To achieve this, he even moved to Connecticut in order to be close to certain of his victims. For several years he covered them with unctuous praise in print as well as in private. Meanwhile, he was thoroughly casing the territory. Then he struck. In a blaze of publicity, Mr. Aldridge bit one by one

Gore Vidal's *most recent book is a collection of essays,* Reflections Upon a Sinking Ship.

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those very asses he had with such cunning kissed, earning himself an editorial in *Life* magazine congratulating him for having shown up the decadence and immorality of the postwar writers. He has long since faded from the literary scene . . . as have, fortunately, those scars on which we sit.

Other gangsters today? John Simon was lovingly noted. A Yugoslav with a proud if somewhat incoherent Serbian style (or is it Croatian?—in any case, English is his third language), Mr. Simon has for twenty years slashed his way through literature, theater, cinema. Clanking chains and snapping whips, giggling and hissing, he has ricocheted from one journal to another, and though no place holds him for long, the flow of venom has proved inexhaustible. There is nothing he cannot find to hate. Yet in his way, Mr. Simon is pure; a compulsive rogue criminal, more sadistic Gilles de Rais than neighborhood thug.

Robert Brustein, on the other hand, is not pure; he has ambitions about his station. Mr. Simon knows that he is only an Illyrian gangster and is blessedly free of side; he wants simply to torture and kill in order to be as good an American as Mr. Charles Manson, say, or Lyndon Johnson. But Mr. Brustein wants to matter, to go straight. A failed theater person, he had—has—ambitions not only as director but as an actor. The actor side of him explains why one always felt he was playing, in a somewhat hollow way, the part of a stern highbrow critic, and having the field pretty much to himself because true highbrow critics don't deal with theater. His specialty was lamentation, a sort of Broadway Old Testament prophet, wailing for a Jerusalem that never was. Mr. Brustein's ambition has now translated him from literary gangster to academic bureaucrat but I'm sure he'll be back one of these days. Recidivism is a hundred per cent in such cases.

My fellow heroes then mentioned Richard Gilman. A notorious hood, they assured me. But except for my brief glimpse of him in the pages of *Playbill* (like Cosa Nostra, they will infiltrate anything), he was just another face, as it were, on the post-office wall. Now I have read him.

IT IS difficult to know what to say about *The Confusion of Realms.** Mr. Gilman has collected a number of pieces dealing with the novel and the theater and he presents them to us for . . . what? Our illumination? Admiration? I have read each piece carefully (something no self-respecting gangster would do) and I dutifully took notes. In some ways I found him worse than I expected—gangsters seldom write so dully; he sounds at times as if he were addressing a not very bright class in remedial reading. In other ways, he is better than anticipated: he is not above betraying enthusiasm for a living American writer. Yet at the end of 272 pages I could not make out what he was up to—or, more precisely, just what audience he had in mind. His work is too simple for those who know literature and much too long-winded for those who do not but are sufficently interested to want to know more.

Mr. Gilman's examination of Norman Mailer (last year's obligatory piece) is typical. He writes thousands of words about Mailer; yet says nothing that the Master has not said better about himself (admittedly it is not easy to deal with Mailer since that sly operative is always there first with the most words), concluding with the emotional argument that although Mailer's novels are not much good, it doesn't really matter because he's *ours*. To which the rude answer is he may be yours, but he's certainly not mine. Mr. Gilman goes even further off the rails when he finds Mailer's passion for being in history (not to mention the press) harmful to him as an artist. I would say it was the making of him. The idea of the artist as priest is much loved in gangsterland. They believe that worldly commitment is corrupting. Yet what about Goethe, Voltaire, Byron or, to come up to date, Günter Grass (admired by John Simon . . . oh, the dread kiss of the Mafioso!)? But bookchat writers have never been able to understand that there is no correct deportment for the good artist. Some are exhibitionists, some are shy; some are political, some are apolitical. What matters is not a writer's personality or politics or private behavior but his books. This should be obvious but in an age of slick journalism and swift reputation, it is quite forgotten. More to the point, books are no longer much read while pieces about writers are. Personality is all that matters—as Mailer has neatly grasped—and the chorus does not yet comprehend.

MR. GILMAN'S prose style is . . . well, let him speak for himself: "American critics have rarely possessed any substantial philosophical power or interest (Edmund Wilson accomplished important things without having had any such power or interest at all, but would have been more important, I think, if he had had some) and have shied away from metaphysical areas as from a contagion." This is as bad a sentence as I have ever read and though, admittedly, Mr. Gilman is writing about Miss Susan Sontag whose style is often not much better, some editor ought to have come to his aid.

Stylistically he—but who cares about language? With each generation American prose grows worse, reflecting confused thinking, poor education, and the incomplete assimilation of immigrant English into the old language (see Henry James's remarks on the subject at Bryn Mawr, 1904). Nevertheless, even in a bad time, a writer's prose does give some idea of the way his mind works. From his prose, I should say that Mr. Gilman's mind is slow and uncertain, more at home with moral exhortation than with analysis. The uncertainty is betrayed by the use of adjectives. He likes them in threes, and even fours, resembling in this many popular lady writers (and at least one good one, Nathalie Sarraute): ". . . documents of the white normative Western consciousness and spirit, which blacks in America today have begun to repudiate in ways that are as yet clumsy, painful and confused." Then, on the same page: ". . . hard, local, intransigent, alien [*The Autobiography of*

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Malcolm X] remains in some sense unassimilable for those of us who aren't black." He is also unnaturally fond of the word "increment" which he occasionally misuses—or at least I think he does: it is often hard to guess his meaning.

For the most part, Mr. Gilman's subjects are as fashionable as his opinions. He believes that black writing cannot be judged by white standards: good politics but an intellectual cop-out. This is followed by the usual piece on McLuhan, a solemn meditation on Susan Sontag's theory of the new which we shall get to in a moment, hesitant praise for William Gass and Donald Barthelme, attacks on Rechy's *City of Night* (why bother?) and Updike, whose mastery of English prose makes Mr. Gilman, predictably, uneasy; and then a good deal about the theater, most of it dated ("the extraordinary public awareness of *Macbird!* as a solid fact, a potent presence"). Excepting Barthelme and Gass, the subjects are familiar, the judgments unsurprising, the uneasy self-importance irritating ("I myself, a 'judge' who passes on writing"—the quotes around the word 'judge' are the give-away). But though Mr. Gilman's theories of art are resolutely second-hand, they are still worth examining for what they have to tell us about—how would he put it?—our life today.

Mr. Gilman has his idols—somewhat. He thinks Miss Sontag "one of the most interesting and valuable critics we possess, a writer from whom it's continually possible to learn, even when you're most dissatisfied with what she's saying, or perhaps especially at those times." Mr. Gilman relies heavily on the "or perhapses" that let him off those critical hooks he has a tendency to get himself hung on as his slow, bumbling sentences nervously unfold like bolts of wet wool. Here are two hooks in one sentence: "We might call her a critic of ideas, except that she has always wished to treat ideas sensuously, aesthetically; or decide that she is a philosopher of cultural forms, except that philosophy for her has always been a drama rather than a method." Reading this, one realizes that Mr. Gilman is a serious literary critic, even though he does not actually write criticism; a profound thinker were his mind not shallow.

THROUGHOUT *The Confusion of Realms*, Mr. Gilman reminds us that the writers he admires (Gass and Barthelme) are making new things, and the ones he cannot endorse, like Mailer, are simply repeating old forms. But again let us listen to his very own voice: "*The Naked and the Dead* remains at bottom a conventional work of literature. As it shapes itself into a tale, it proceeds along predictable lines, creates no convincingly new style, and offers no new purchase on imaginative reality, nothing that can be used by other writers as a model of a way of seeing, or as incontrovertible vision by anyone else." Let us pause (Gilman's "we-ness" is contagious) and try to figure out what he is saying. First, *The Naked and the Dead* is a conventional novel, predictable, no new style, etc. Placed beside Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, yes, it is an ordinary sort of book, and though one could excuse some of its ordinariness on the ground that most first novels are derivative, let's allow Mr. Gilman the point. Next he tells us that Mailer's novel offers "nothing that can be used by other writers. . . ." This is a startling approach to literature. Apparently books are valuable only to the extent that they will help other writers to make newer and newer books to be added as links to some sort of Hegelian chain. Could it be, terrible thought, that Mr. Gilman believes in Progress? If I did not know the reading habits of gangsterdom better, I'd suspect him of having read Comte.

Repeatedly, Mr. Gilman rejects what he thinks of as old forms of theater and the novel on the ground "that the distinction between form and content in art was never valid and that we have not simply come into a new use for content as form but into a condition in which seeming content, 'subject matter,' no longer is needed to serve as pretext and instigation for aesthetic action." "Fiction . . . can no longer be (if ever it wholly was) the expression or [*sic*] interruption or simulacrum of life and its values. . . ." And finally, "fiction ought not to be an employment of language for ends beyond itself, but language in its own right, mysteriously saturated with reality, perpetuallly establishing a new synthesis of reality and the imagination, and doing this partly by driving out all language which has accomplished an earlier synthesis." As those interested in theories of the novel will recognize, Mr. Gilman has been reading Robbe-Grillet, or at least he has learned about him through Miss Sontag's high Hollywood or Hollywood High prose. They are great drivers-out of language. But to what end? Everyone agrees that three-act plays imitating real people in a real room are as tedious as realistic novels that deal with quotidian affairs. There is no point in reading a novel which could have been written by Galsworthy or—to be just—a novel which might have been written by Joyce. Nevertheless, as Mr. Gilman himself points out—positively insists—writers do use one another. Literature cannot be born "new" the instant a writer, even a master, starts to write. Writing is a more complicated matter than that and no critic—much less gangster—has yet cracked the code.

TRADITIONALLY, what a critic admires defines him, and makes him a critic rather than a gangster. To Mr. Gilman's credit, he does his best to appreciate certain new-seeming writers. Unfortunately, in controlling the Mafioso side to himself he often sounds like an old hood who now serves, somewhat uncomprehendingly, on the board of a bank whose safe he would rather be cracking. Mr. Gilman likes William Gass, and he writes interestingly about Mr. Gass's novel *Omensetter's Luck*—at least his remarks are interesting to one who has not read the novel. He even communicates enthusiasm, up to a point; then the banker feels compelled to give his report to the board. "The novel *is* Gass' prose, his style, which is not committed to something beyond itself" (a paraphrase of Robbe-Grillet, by the way), "not an instrument of an idea . . . he fashions his tale of the mind, which is the tale of his writing a novel." But then, realiz-

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ing the extent of his endorsement, Mr. Gilman begins to take it back. He confesses to finding the novel faulty because of "its partial organization along narrative lines, its compulsion to tell a 'story'" (those quotes again: doesn't he know what a story is?) "while its whole internal action struggles against the reductions and untruthfulness of story-telling, while its verbal action is struggling to *be* the story." (Note the assumption that storytelling is false but putting down words—at random?—is the novel's proper "struggle.") "For narrative, which Bernard Shaw long ago called 'the curse of all serious literature' and which every major novelist since Flaubert has either abandoned or used ironically, is precisely that element of fiction which coerces it and degrades it into being a mere alternative to life, *like* life. . . ."

None of this is true. Every major novelist since Flaubert has been as much involved with narrative as those who went before; not to mention Flaubert himself as he meticulously maneuvered his Emmas and Homaises logically from place to place. Specialists even assure us that there is a preordained structure to *Finnegans Wake*. As for Lawrence, Conrad, Hardy, Mann, Musil, Proust, none eschewed or treated with irony narrative. One has only to study those extraordinary scenarios Henry James wrote for each of his works to realize just how important narrative is to a master novelist.

Now if Mr. Gilman were simply to say that we ought not to read bad novels with familiar plots, who would disagree with him? But wanting to be resonant, and radical, and full of certain French critics (at second hand, I suspect; curiously enough, he seems not to have read Barthes, nor grasped semiology), he writes such inflated nonsense as "What Gass has written is a work of the imagination and the mind whose study is the mind and imagination themselves as they grant us the instruments of knowing, which are at the same time the sources of all our inability to know." It makes one long for the good old days of Bonnie and Clyde, of Simon and Brustein.

"We are bored," Mr. Gilman suddenly announces, "by most plays today . . . bored by Shakespeare, too, and Molière and Greek tragedy (young people have never been so bored by classics), by Shaw and Pirandello and Brecht. Even by Ionesco and Genet." He is probably right (and writers and teachers like Mr. Gilman have certainly helped make art dull for the many) but he never questions the why of this boredom. Instead he gives us his neo-Robbe-Grillet analysis: "As long as we regard [theater] as illusion instead of a form of reality, we will go on being bored with it as we are bored, ultimately, with all illusions." This is fatuous. People live by illusions. Whether it is that college boy who rises at the end of the lecture and declares, not asks, "Don't you think Bob Dylan is the greatest living poet?" or Richard Nixon not wanting to be the first American President to lose a war or the audience of *Easy Rider* which knows it is not on the road itself but watching actors on a screen create a naturalistic illusion of freedom that corresponds with their own daydreams, we live by illusion in life as in art. Theater is plays. Plays are simulacra of life just as print (to the atonishment of Robbe-Grillet) stands not for its own black inky self but for words which in turn stand for objects and actions. That words and phrases become corrupt with use and misuse is a perennial problem which only high excellence among writers can solve.

READING *The Confusion of Realms* (with some continence I have refrained from making any play on the title: a gangster would have gone on and on about it), I find myself wondering who reads this sort of writing and what pleasure and revelation they get from it? Is there a public I know nothing of? Quite possibly. After all, I am no longer much involved with the United States. For all I know there are students of education who carefully read (with lips moving?) these long confusions. But I doubt it. With the exception of one piece, there is no ease, no joy, no light in Mr. Gilman's writing. Every sentence seems to have been an effort for him to make, as though he knew he had nothing to say but was impelled for career reasons to set down something. Certainly he has no talent at all for our difficult and various language—by no means a deterrent, let me quickly say, to a literary career in America. Yet it must be a terrible strain to have to keep on doing something one does not do easily or well.

As I write, I have been thinking about other careers for Mr. Gilman. English teaching? No. He would be redundant. Political commentary or action seems out; he shows no great interest in such things. Should he be an actor like Mr. Brustein? Manage a team of lady wrestlers? Work with his hands? But I have no way of knowing his true talents. So accepting him for what he would like to be, a writer, I can hold out some hope. I enjoyed his straightforward description of what happened at the Village Gate when two sets of gangsters (the anarchist hoods led by Mr. and Mrs. Beck and the old-guard hoods led by Mr. Brustein) had their showdown. Not having to worry about Culture and Meaning, Mr. Gilman has written a genuinely interesting—even witty—report of the evening (all right, he does bring in Artaud and he refers to that profoundly boring play *The Brig* as "remarkable and revivifying" but for him these are small *bêtises*). He has a surprising gift for psychological description, particularly when he records the Livers' doctrine of love (which is really hate). I particularly liked his reference to the Becks as "pushy martyrs."

Quite seriously, I would advise Mr. Gilman to leave respectable gangsterdom to Mr. Brustein. But not go back to his old ways: leave them to Mr. Simon who still prowls the criminal night, switch knife at the ready. Instead, I would very much like to see Mr. Gilman write popular journalism; he has a real talent for it. But I fear he will be decieved by the good reviews he has no doubt already arranged for his book, and so persist in error. But should he go straight, we heroes will gladly allow him to attend us, if not at the Pantheon, as a faithful spear-carrier at high Valhalla.

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The Future of Prediction

John P. Sisk

DESPITE THE fact that a sizable portion of the under-thirty crowd is trying to make its preoccupation with NOW the special mark of the late 60's and early 70's, most of us of whatever age appear to be more concerned with the future. The futures business is big business, according to a feature article in the August *Chemical and Engineering News*; there is even a World Futures Society with three thousand members and its own journal—the *Futurist*. Some of the most respectable people are staring into crystal balls, reading palms, consulting the numbers, or dropping hot wax into bowls of water; astrology is experiencing a renaissance (there is even an astrological company that uses a computer to cast its horoscopes); the pentecostal movement, whether Catholic or Protestant, has revived interest in the charismatic gift of prophecy; biologists, picking up where science fiction left off, foresee the genetic engineering of slave animals and cybernetic organisms, as well as the control of mutation by genetic surgery or artificial wombs. Meanwhile, think-tanks such as the Rand Corporation, General Electric's TEMPO, the National Industrial Conference Board, the Institute for the Future, the Stanford Research Institute, and Herman Kahn's Hudson Institute continue to sophisticate their extrapolations and refine their scenarios in an effort to make the 21st century endurable, or at least possible—despite the fact that a man named Criswell has announced that the world as we know it will come to an end on August 18, 1999.

Criswell, who can be as grim about the future as Franch sociologist Jacques Ellul or Birchite Robert Welch, demonstrates that a prophet need not be an optimist to be successful. Indeed, there are times when it seems that George Orwell and Aldous Huxley (not to mention William Golding and Konrad Lorenz) have set the tone for modern prediction, especially among those humanists whose natural bias is for the catastrophic. The bias is understandable when one reads the list of the hundred likely technical innovations in Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener's *The Year 2000*, or is confronted with the highly rational and technological future in Gerald Fineberg's *The Prometheus Project*. Such forecasts might have passed for visions of paradise at the turn of the century; now, with their emphasis on control, manipulation, and transformation they strike many of us as previews of disaster.

However, for the hopeful there are more promising signs: McLuhanites still anticipate the electronic global village; R. Buckminster Fuller has great hopes for nonspecialized man; Herbert Marcuse has not given up on the conquest of surplus repression; the disciples of Norman O. Brown still dream of the ultimate triumph of the polymorphous perverse; some highly regarded astrologers are convinced we are due for a two-thousand-year Aquarian reign of enlightenment and peace; Bob Dylan in his prophetic poem "When the Ship Comes In" foresees the hour when "They'll raise their hands/Sayin' we'll meet all your demands"; and Jean Dixon, whose autobiographies *A Gift of Prophecy* and *My Life and Prophecies* have been best-sellers, is sure that America "will be divinely protected during the difficult years ahead."

ALL OF THIS is to be expected. Men being time-bound and therefore compelled to bind up time are constitutionally prediction-prone. In order to make sense out of their allotted time, Frank Kermode writes in *A Sense of an Ending*, "they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and poems." Predictions supply these concords, especially, as T. S. Eliot puts it in "The Dry Salvages," "When there is distress of nations and perplexity/ Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road." It is this perplexity, this lack of a sense of an ending, that is intolerable. Aristotle reports that the playwright Agathon operated on the principle that it is likely that the unlikely will happen. No doubt, a history of prediction would bear him out, and Lloyd's of London, who recently announced that unlimited liability must go because of the riskiness of the future, would probably agree with him. As a matter of fact, Kahn and Wiener themselves, after almost four hundred pages, admit quite soberly that "the future is an area of great uncertainty." But if this is the truth of the matter, for most of us it is unacceptable; we want what the Hudson Institute strives to give us, and what Lloyd's of London would sell its soul for: surprise-free projections. The direst prediction, if it extends the familiar, at least makes an intelligible connection between present and future. To "know" that it will all end on August 18, 1999, makes some kind of sense, however appallingly, in terms of the world in which we currently live. It gives one an end to plan toward.

Smart predictors have no doubt always known that Agathon is right—that in fact they have a great professional dependence on the unpredictability of the future. They rely on a public in which a hunger for prediction is combined with a living awareness of what might be called the Agathon factor in the human condition. Like political candidates (or like charismatic totalitarians, for that matter) they know that it can be more important to predict than to predict accurately, and that there are times when it is even safer to predict catastrophes categorically than triumphs subjunctively. Perhaps this is why Criswell and Jean Dixon have a larger following than Kahn and Wiener. The latter deal in alternate futures and so place too great a burden on man's capacity to

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plan. The early Church's not too successful efforts to demythologize the Apocalypse imposed a similar burden. It was easier to plan apocalyptically, suffer disconfirmation (to which, Kermode observes, people tend to be remarkably indifferent), and then invent a new end-fiction, perhaps no less naive than the old.

The relative immunity of predictors from the consequences of inaccurate prediction suggest some general, if implicit, awareness of the predictor's utility for the present. Kahn and Wiener appear to have this "present" function of prediction in mind when they speak of the prediction fictions of Orwell and Huxley as "passionately aimed at changing the future." The adverb recognizes, if only indirectly, the fact that *1984* and *Brave New World* are satiric anatomies of the worlds in which they were written more than they are efforts to present surprise-free scenarios of the future. Insofar as they are effective, such fictions counter undesirable futures by directing attention to trends or potentialities "passionately" present to their creators. In fact, to the extent that it is a criticism of the present, all fiction tends to counter possible futures which it considers objectionable. This is one reason why great fictions continue to be meaningful: they continue to function as counters to futures that continue to be undesirable—resembling in this respect the utterances of Old Testament prophets, who were less concerned with predicting particular events in time than with revealing what history was all about at any time. *Macbeth,* one of the greatest of these fictions, and itself a play about prediction, continues to counter the dehumanizing aspiration to confine the future to the expansion of one's own ego.

Popular prediction is no less present-serving, however literally future-anticipating. Indeed, the two aspects of prediction cannot be separated, probably because it is impossible for most of us to live with any comfort in a present in which we cannot sense that some appreciable effort is being exerted to prevent quite possible but unwanted futures. Even the passionate commitment to momentary experience that characterizes so many of the young implies a future in which it will be possible to continue so to commit oneself (and implies too a theology in which some transcendent power guarantees continuing protection for a kind of heroic fecklessness). Popular prediction also indicates the need of prediction fictions (in effect, dramatized ideologies) in order to evaluate and come to some kind of terms with the present. If it does nothing else, it gives the illusion of countering one of the worst possible futures in our kind of society: an utterly unpredictable one. For without prediction most of us are in the predicament Pascal imagines in his *Pensées*: "like a man who should be carried in his sleep to a dreadful desert island, and should awake without knowing where he is, and without means of escape."

Daniel Bell, chairman of the Commission on the Year 2000, observed in *Daedalus* (Summer 1964) that one of the "hallmarks of modernity is the awareness of change and the struggling effort to control the direction and pace of change." It is such an awareness that leads Kahn and Wiener to conclude that the prediction fictions of Orwell and Huxley are likely to prove more influential than more systematic and scientific projections. This surely has something to do with the fact that these fictions are predictions of disaster. Such predictions give hyperbolic expression to present fears about quite possible futures and so focus attention on their probable causes in the present. They have the effect of morale-building devices, as if they were the horror stories people quite deliberately tell themselves in an effort to marshal their energies for counteraction. Thus for some years now we have had the John Birch Society predicting an almost certain Communist takeover on the one hand, and acting vigorously as if to prove that prediction false on the other. Such a paradox calls attention to an easily overlooked aspect of prediction: that it is, among other things, a dramatic device directed against the human capacity for complacency and inattention, and hence has many of the marks of the advertisement and of rabbinic midrash.

Predictions of disaster are dialectically related to those promoters of complacency and inattention, our daydreams. Daydreams are the most naive and least surprise-free forms of prediction we know; if they are not countered they can lure us into a future in which we will be disillusioned and demoralized. Daydreams have exponential growth patterns (they increase geometrically and reach for the stars) as against the logistic patterns of actual experience. The gap between the two is one measure of the human condition. Predictions of disaster, then, can be panicky overreactions to the discovery of this gap; hence they are the frightening but conceivably sobering underside to an either/or. This is why popular predictions of disaster are so often dreamlike in their naiveté: the weird little men descend from their space ships prepared to devastate the earth; the megalomaniac super-scientist threatens to push the button that will unleash the doomsday machine; the totalitarian Big Brother and his cynical elite lock the human race in spirit-destroying servitude. Such fantasy horrors cannot be separated from those visions of a godlike capacity for consumption and satisfaction with which modern man is bedazzled, and by the immoderation of which he senses himself to be threatened. One might, in other words, consider the possibility that the human race possesses a certain protective awareness that to hope for a future in which things do not get worse is really to hope for a great deal.

MYTHS, those marvelously economic processors and organizers of information, bring past, present, and future into a magic continuity and are thus highly predictive. They counter possible futures by restricting choices, and most of them build morale by ignoring the Agathon factor—both important features in a period when, because of the accelerating rate of flow of time and information, too many futures appear possible. The 19th century's myth of progress was such a predictive morale builder, but, as we have learned painfully, its predictions turned out to be highly inaccurate. As it seems now, the

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myth of progress was countering the wrong future all along: hence in the 20th century those who had been entranced by it were demoralized when the unpredicted future became the appalling present. The 19th century lived in and projected a cultural daydream from which we are still trying to recover.

Americans are still trying to recover from their entrancement by the highly predictive myths that structure the national experience: the myth of the city on the hill, the myth of the journey toward the east, the myth of the garden, the myth of a salvational relation with wilderness. The fact that America was for so long, and so successfully, a concatenation of optimistic predictions helps to explain why Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* had to wait so long before being widely accepted as a major American novel. It was necessary first that we experience as a nation Jay Gatsby's profound, if only briefly endured, disillusion with the predictions of the American Dream.

THE MAGIC predictive world of American myth helps to explain too the religious heat with which conservatives have tended to react to liberal advocacy of federal planning as a profane rejection of the old predictions, which by having come true not only made America great but validated themselves as standing predictions. American conservatives (except when radicals are too noisy) naturally tend to be optimistic and to see the future in exponential terms, and yet there has always been a static quality in their predictions: they have promised more of the same and so have tended to ignore the possibility of a future in which economic and technological progress produces profound sociological, psychological, and biological problems. The American Right, having dreamt non-ecological dreams, has woken to ecological nightmares. Meanwhile, the New Left devotes a good deal of its energy to proving, or at least asserting by way of counter-prediction, that the ecology of the Old Left was really a failure of nerve.

In the "Phaedrus" Plato has Socrates distinguish between the divine madness of prophecy and the more rational but inferior art of divination. In this scheme Criswell and Miss Dixon would rank higher than Kahn and Wiener, who are mere diviners. The latter, however, have a very real advantage in a time when too many futures appear to be possible: they hedge their bets by considering alternate futures and canonical variations on standard worlds. Thus they might be called ironic predictors. Most prediction in America, whether Right or Left, has tended to fall in the Criswell-Dixon category: prophetically extremist and non-ironic. Whitman, a predictive poet if there ever was one, is typical at the end of "A Passage to India" when he urges us to "steer for the deep water only,/Reckless O soul exploring, I with thee and thou with me./For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go./And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all." And yet, he promises, this is a "daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?" Whitman's confident openness to the future (remember that he was a believer in phrenology and took great comfort from the predictions yielded by the measurement of his skull) is a kind of laissez faire that has its profane parallel in the post-Civil War establishment world, in which also men were sailing forth with all the energy and intrepidity of those to whom the future had been guaranteed by the Great Phrenologist Himself.

In America as elsewhere the predictions of the Right and Left tend to be mutually determining. The closer they come to a state of polarization the more they resemble each other: law-and-order libertarianism on the Right is matched by anarchic egalitarianism on the Left. Right and Left use predictions of disaster as threats, the tactical hyperbole of the one determining that of the other, so that in effect George Wallace and Jerry Rubin attempt to immobilize each other in a dilemma that involves a choice between an unacceptable goal and an unthinkable catastrophe. One can of course conceive a future in which the real catastrophe will be not the triumph of either extreme but the consequences of the violent dialectic itself.

However, it is conceivable too that the violent dialectic will inspire a more ironic attitude toward all prediction and toward the impatience that non-ironic prediction both expresses and induces. Such an attitude would have to anticipate accusations of indifference or backlashing failure of nerve, particularly if it did not itself become the informing tone for a program of constructive action. Those who pursue such a program would be aware that goals turn into predictions out of a need to give them sanction and validity and to improve operational morale. They would have learned the extent to which rapid change induces in many people (not all of them under thirty) the expectation of a quantum leap that will deliver them at last from the whole burden of the past. They would also recognize the extent to which most prediction is at bottom the expression of a conservative impulse: the desire to achieve in some future present a state of affairs so satisfactory and so solidly established that time and change are no threat to it.

LEWIS MUMFORD has shown in an important *Daedalus* essay (Spring 1965) how ingrained in our culture this impulse is, how involved with the history of the city and the machine. What strikes him, as it has indeed struck many, is the impoverishment of imagination revealed in our utopian speculations. Contemplating the compulsion and regimentation that mark "these supposedly ideal commonwealths," and comparing them "with even the simplest manifestations of spontaneous life within the teeming environment of nature," he is forced to conclude that "every utopia is, almost by definition, a sterile desert, unfit for human occupation." The same thing might be said of Gerald Fineberg's Prometheus Project, despite its high-minded concern for a future grounded on a worldwide democratic consensus.

Fineberg, a theoretical physicist, envisages a future in which a symbiosis of man and machine will be achieved—one in which machines, having become in some real sense both intelligent and creative, will even afford a degree of spiritual companionship to man. To him biologic engineering holds out the

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possibility of extending human life indefinitely, of transforming human personality so that the gap between desire and fulfillment will be eliminated or sharply reduced, and of moving all men toward "the level of the best-endowed normal man." Here, mixed with a genuine concern for grave human problems, and a commendable suspicion of goal-setting elites, is that abstract intelligence which Mumford sees as "operating with its own conceptual apparatus, in its own restrictive field . . . determined to make the world over in its own over-simplified terms, willfully rejecting interests and values incompatible with its own assumptions."

Fineberg's Prometheus Project demonstrates not only the inseparability of prediction and technological planning but the fundamentally restrictive nature of most prediction: the extent to which it is a conservative and protective recoil from the mysterious complexity of human nature and the bewildering variety of alternatives built into the human condition. One can see this recoil at work in the condescension with which some scientists react to what seems to them to be the conceptual ambiguity, structural open-endedness, and thematic triviality of literature. To the Columbia physicist I. I. Rabi, for instance, poems, even the works of Shakespeare, are only "wonderful glorified gossip," and poets, who talk about everday things, are inferior to scientists, the only ones who deal with the grand themes and display imagination in its most profound reaches.

There is no shortage of grand themes in our predictive scenarios, which have gathered to themselves much of the impulse that once went into epic. How hypnotically restrictive they are too likely to be in their grandness can be seen in that great piece of gossip, *Macbeth*. Macbeth is compelled by the grandest of themes—"the imperial theme," as he terms it. Enthralled by the witches' prediction, he attempts to transform his nature in the interest of closing the gap between desire and fulfillment: he attempts to remove that troubling and complicating part of himself which his wife calls the "milk of human kindness." But the impatient effort to transform himself in pursuit of the grand theme displays the same impoverishment of imagination that the acceptance of the prediction did in the first place. To pursue grand themes in such a constricted and dehumanizing perspective, Shakespeare and Lewis Mumford agree, is to create, and risk ultimate demoralization by, grand and unanticipated problems, for the pursuer is haunted by the once possible future he chose to ignore. Analogically, then, *Macbeth* is a play about technology: its hero is both agent and victim of an inexorable man-consuming process.

THE BEST prediction is ecological in that it tries to take into account the interrelationship of all relevant factors, which is to say that it is a highly imaginative act. At the same time it is ironic, which is to say that it is prepared to discover that some factor or factors were not taken into account. Most prediction in America is non-ecological as well as non-ironic, and far too much of it is not even recognized as predictive since prediction is a built-in function of our myths and dreams. An ironic attitude toward our predictions would tend to moderate the hubristic and Faustean impulses which they give shape to, in however disguised a manner. Kahn and Wiener recognize that these impulses are responsible for some of the nightmares in their scenarios. Daniel Bell would seem to agree with them. "For in the preoccupation with prediction," he says at the end of his *Daedalus* essay, "one risks the hubris of the historicist mode of thought which sees the future as 'pre-viewed' in some 'cunning of reason' or other determinist vision of human affairs."

Our Faustean impulses imply a scenario somewhat different from that of the pre-romantic Faust story, in which the central figure must suffer the consequences of his immoderate aspiration to live like a god. They embody our modern confidence that, as Bell puts it, "there are no inherent secrets in the universe, and that all is open." As John McDermott has pointed out in "Technology: the Opiate of the Intellectuals" (the *New York Review of Books*, July 31, 1969), this confidence is most conspicuously located in a scientific and technological elite convinced that technological innovation "exhibits a distinct tendency to work for the general welfare in the long run." It depends upon the conviction, crucial to both Macbeth and Fineberg, that the gap between the knowable and the known has been reduced to the point where long-range planning is possible for the first time in the history of man, and that "through our scientific knowledge and technological ability," as Fineberg puts it, "we can be fairly confident that there will be no technical barriers to the accomplishment of our goals."

The proper reaction of the ironist to such a conviction is that of St. Paul. The latter rated prophecy high among the gifts of the spirit, but this did not keep him from reminding the Corinthians that since our knowledge is partial, since "we see now in a mirror, in a confused sort of way," therefore our prophesying is incomplete. In St. Paul, as in Agathon, there is a warning for all future Macbeths—the warning implied in Bell's remark that "the function of prediction is not, as often stated, to aid social control, but to widen the spheres of moral choice." Unfortunately, most of our predictions, expressive as they are of the various tyrannies that contend for dominion in our world, aim at an opposite state of affairs: one in which the only available choice is an orthodoxy.

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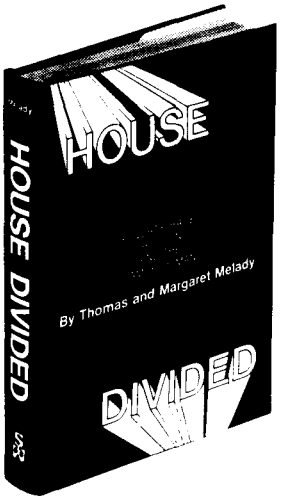

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The Princess

ONLY ONE YEAR. By SVETLANA ALLILUYEVA. Translated by Paul Chavchavadze. *Harper & Row. 444 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by PHILIP RAHV

THE TOTALLY unexpected appearance among us of Stalin's daughter as a leading exponent of anti-Communism, as a living witness, that is, of the horrors of the system of which her father was the chief architect, is surely one of the weirdest incidents of the cold war. Still, there is something fishy about this entire incident and the resultant worldwide publicity it has called forth. It strikes one as being more like a *coup de théâtre* than as a political event of genuine substance.

The fact is that save for a few valuable personal details about her mother and father, as well as about the life at home of her father's principal cronies like Voroshilov, Molotov, and Mikoyan, her exposure of the Soviet regime offers virtually nothing that has not been known to many of us for a long, long time. Thus for her to set out at this late date to persuade us of the vileness of this regime is supererogatory, to say the least; and if any new documentation is still needed, a novel like Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* is far more engrossing, far and away a superior work. The truth is that Svetlana merely aspires to be a writer while Solzhenitsyn actually is one, and infinitely more stirring and eloquent than she can ever be. In the matter of sensibility, courage, and tenacity of mind and spirit, she nowhere comes near the impression that Solzhenitsyn has made on us. Svetlana is lavish with words, to be sure, but her level of culture strikes me as being about that of a steady reader of the *Reader's Digest*—a periodical she has probably never laid eyes on.

So Svetlana's latest work, being devoid of the quality of personal exigency or authentic political content, is, to my mind, strictly redundant. It is plain that the fanfare with which she has been greeted and the acclaim with which her writings are published are solely due to the fact that she is Stalin's daughter. For years she was the princess of the Kremlin, and at present she is the princess of Harper & Row and of the media. So Svetlana is still a princess, though now pressed into service on "our" side of the cold war. I confess that I find this entire episode somewhat disconcerting, if not actually unseemly. It appears to me that if I were a child of Stalin's, I would take care to retire into some quiet backwater or else seek release from this awful misfortune in some other equally drastic manner. True enough, it is not her fault that she is the daughter of "a moral and spiritual monster," as she now speaks of her father. (In *Twenty Letters* her tone was quite different, with Beria cast in the role of the chief culprit.) There are situations in life, however, that are wholly irredeemable and irreparable. For Svetlana to push herself forward and play the role of a celebrity after all that her vicious father had wrought is nothing more than blatant self-indulgence, a piece of inordinate egotism, sheer *chutzpah* in fact.

IN REVIEWING this book for the *New Yorker* Edmund Wilson characterized it as "a unique document" that will take its place "among the great Russian autobiographical works: Herzen, Kropotkin, Tolstoy's *My Confession*." This is a statement so fatuous as to leave one fairly gasping. Surely Mr. Wilson, an outstandingly gifted critic, has come a cropper here. As I read Svetlana's book it contains not one iota of Herzen's brilliant wit and world-historical perspectives. As for Tolstoy, his *My Confession* is unequaled as the work of a powerful imagination and at the same time as a mighty feat of consciousness. In my view Svetlana's laborious production has nothing whatever in common with the great Russian autobiographies that Mr. Wilson mentions with such astonishing facility of reference. Not so very long ago I praised Mr. Wilson for the *esprit voltairien* that animated him in resisting the flopover to religiosity of some of our leading intellectuals in the late 1940's and early 1950's. How, then, can he accept without demur Svetlana's mawkish religiosity and schoolgirlish obeisances to "the Lord." Altogether she seems to regard herself as a regular subscriber to the Lord's services, without whose "special assistance," as she claims, she could not have taken the "decisive step" of putting herself under the protection of the American embassy in Delhi. "Of importance to me," she writes, "were not the dogmas of Christianity, nor the ritual, but the eternal Life, the eternal Good." And again: "All the great religions of the earth have a high moral teaching in common." Yes, but what about their practice? When one thinks of the innumerable wars, massacres, and pogroms perpetrated in the name of one religion or another one cannot but be appalled by her innocence. Or is it innocence? No wonder Pimen, the Metropolitan of Orthodoxy in Moscow, was able to say: "She is not a Christian, she is interested in all religions at once." As a young girl she was a devout Communist, which, after all, is a secular religion of a sort. Now she prefers religions otherworldly in essence. She cannot do without dreams of salvation, but all such dreams imply an absolute; and her present absolute is "the Supreme Mind" which "governs the world." Even Tolstoy was not at all sure of this last proposition, but Svetlana is no skeptic. She luxuriates in certainties.

Moreover, she writes about

PHILIP RAHV *is professor of English at Brandeis. His most recent book is* Literature and the Sixth Sense *(Houghton-Mifflin).*

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America as if it were Utopia achieved, a veritable paradise on earth. Everywhere she finds the same "homey atmosphere of informality, mutual trust, and simplicity." "How they love to smile," she exclaims in looking at Americans. It does not even occur to her that this perpetual smile conceals a nervous tic, a radical uncertainty about their real identity. The only Americans exempted from her general benedictions are the hippies she saw during a stroll through Greenwich Village. "Hippies are nothing but froth, nothing but trash in the streets of large cities." The real America she locates in the small towns and farms —"the epitome of health." It may be news to her but the majority of Americans now live in the big cities. No doubt much can be said against the hippies; on the other hand, to say that they are nothing but trash is an absurd and arrogant statement. The fact is that Svetlana's response to the United States is mere witless idealization. The only Americans she has met are a few very well-to-do people who have treated her with special consideration since she is the daughter of you know who and "a hot property" besides. And from this extremely restricted experience she draws large generalizations. That the cities are decaying, that the blacks are in revolt, that millions don't get enough to eat and that millions are protesting the senseless war in Vietnam—all this she shuts out from her consciousness. To recognize such disagreeable facts would after all dispel her dream of the promised land.

Furthermore, she tells her story with less than complete candor. I, for one, am far from convinced that she went to India for the sole purpose of scattering her Indian husband's ashes in the Ganges. This husband, Brajesh Sing, is quoted as telling her that the Ganges does not really matter, for all rivers are alike in flowing into the sea. She persisted nonetheless, and her request got very special attention, first from Khrushchev and later from Kosygin and Suslov. And when she finally arrived in the village of Kalakandar, the home of her husband's family, she was told that only men could perform the religious rite of scattering the ashes in the sacred river. At this point she no longer cared, for her eyes were already riveted on distant America, so big and so glamorous. To me it appears far more likely that her reason for going to India was the manuscript of *Twenty Letters* ("that ticket to another life") which she had previously sent off to Delhi by diplomatic pouch. And so far as her idea of America is concerned, she seems to have absorbed it from special showings of American movies in the Kremlin. Thus she gradually built up a fancy-picture of America staggering in its naiveté and to which she still holds fast.

She writes that she "loved and respected" her father until she grew up. But now that she knows the horrid truth about him, she has found another cult-object she can worship, and this time it is nothing less than a whole country, very large, extremely various and extremely contradictory in many of its aspects. This woman seems to be bent on wasting herself in postures of adoration. The term "democratic socialism" is not mentioned in her book; nor is the term "capitalism." The only choice her limited mind can comprehend is between the Soviet Union as it is today and America as it is. Clearly, Svetlana is not a woman capable of communing with history. She is merely its victim.

High Finance

MONEY INTERNATIONAL. By FRED HIRSCH. Introduction by Richard N. Cooper. *Doubleday. 420 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by LAWRENCE MALKIN

TWO DAYS after Harold Wilson first came to power in 1964 he made a decision that was to dominate the British government's policies for the next three years: not to devalue the pound sterling. Within the Labour government, it quickly became treason to question sterling. Any suggestions were buried lest they start a run

LAWRENCE MALKIN *is economic correspondent for* Time *magazine in Washington.*

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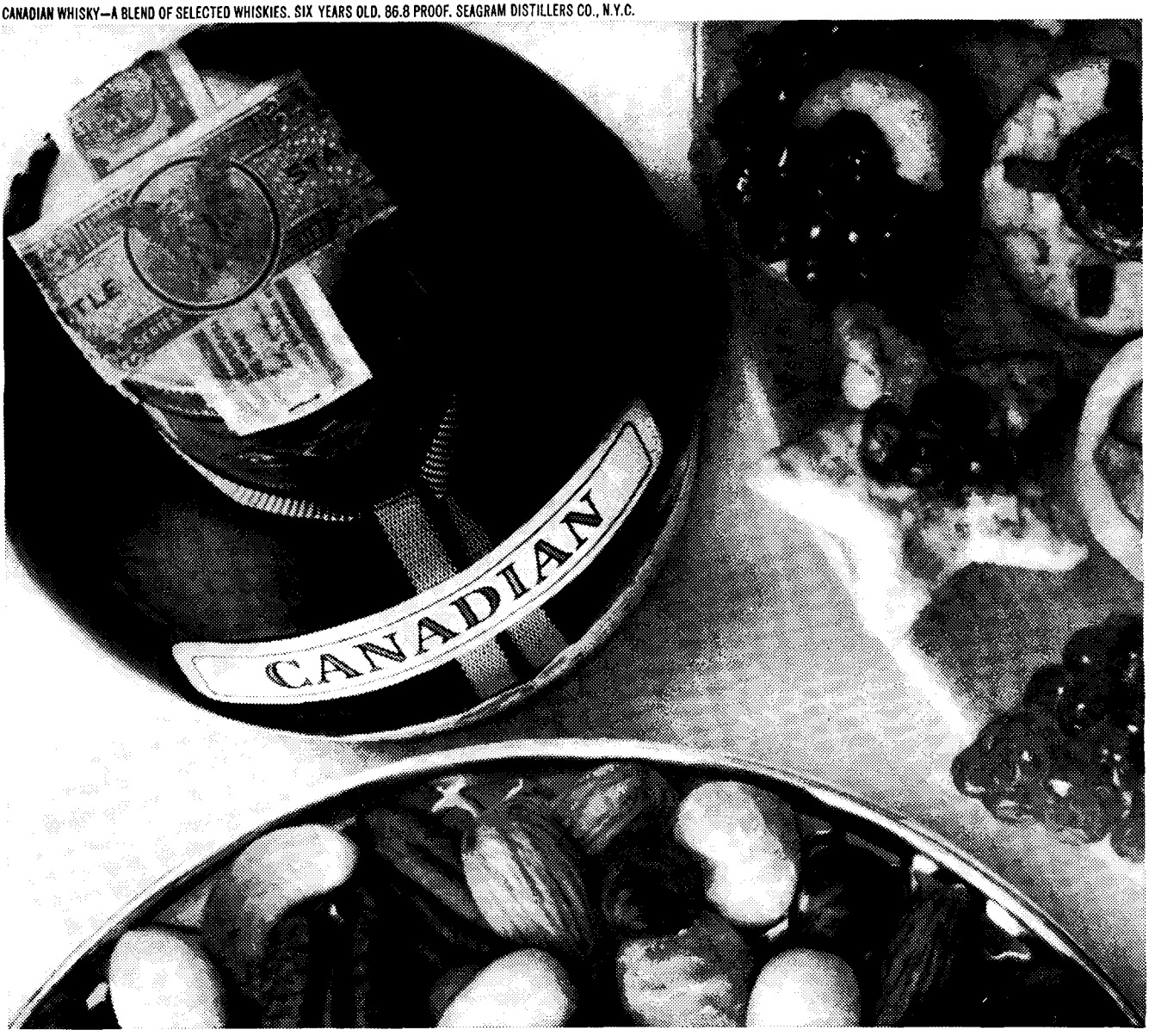

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on the pound—including a letter from two senior government economists to President Kennedy proposing that the pound and the dollar be devalued together to expand credit for world trade. Needless to say, Britain's determination to stand in the front line for the dollar pleased the United States mightily; it merely delayed the day of reckoning and reexamination for a creaking monetary system in which the dollar was king. Washington again coughed up the loans to support the pound. The British government again gloried in the role of junior partner on the world stage. But by now the historic Churchillian "special relationship" had degenerated into that between a banker and his most indebted client.

This is not to say that Britain retained its international role because of anything so crass as a *quid pro quo* for American support for the pound. But once the decision was made to follow the dominant financial tradition, all other decisions flowed from it, and right into the traditional mold. The pound itself became the overriding political factor. Devaluation was damned by Wilson and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, James Callaghan, as "the soft option." Economic policy was based on this belt-tightening puritanical psychology. Instead of mobilizing the social revolution already stirring, the government directed all its energies toward revolutionizing those thrilling balance-of-payments statistics. Necessary measures of economic expansion and social reform were held to ransom so Britain could maintain the pound as one of the world's two reserve currencies, to the attendant profit of bankers in the City of London. But the nation meanwhile lost its economic sovereignty by accepting loans and holding on to foreign deposits that put it on a kind of financial probation. Callaghan, at least, should have known better. As far back as 1961, when the Labour party was still in opposition and he became its spokesman on economic policy, he wrote: "If I were Chancellor of the Exchequer, I should be haunted by thoughts that a decision can always arise in which, irrespective of the soundness of our domestic policies, others hold our destinies in our hands because they hold our currency."

In November 1967, that nightmare came true. I can recall the foreign-exchange dealers' room of a big London bank. The telephones had fallen silent. So had a nearby news ticker. They, and the dealers and customers, were waiting for a statement by Callaghan in the House of Commons. When it came, it was equivocal—for the decision to devalue the pound had already been taken secretly and was not to be announced until that weekend. But no sooner had word of his equivocation cleared the ticker than the buttons on the dealers' phones lit up as if simultaneously plugged into the minds of bankers across the City of London, stirring with a mixture of apprehension, fear, and greed. They carried one message: sell pounds.

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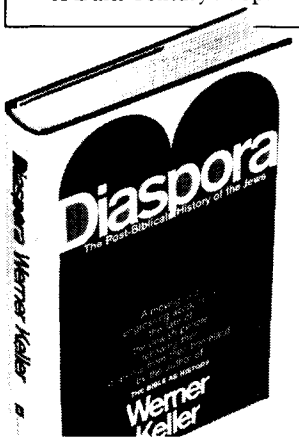

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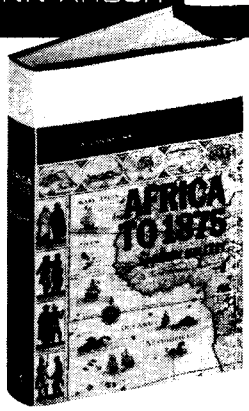

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ground that such matters are too technical for the layman and, like war, should be left to the generals. They have been aided by the fact that the management of money is a matter of abstract and fiendishly complicated techniques which most members of the public simply cannot fathom. But this man-made system has slowly become subject to political control, and it must also become the object of public awareness at the least and of public understanding at best. Mr. Hirsch's book, neatly divided into sections for the general and the technical reader, helps promote that understanding in the tart but commonsensical style of the London *Economist*, where he was financial editor before moving to the research department of the International Monetary Fund in Washington.

"Money is a means, no more and no less," Mr. Hirsch writes. "The basic monetary magnitudes —the level of prices, of interest rates, of the external exchange rate and the whole gamut of high finance—are not ends in themselves. They have no content apart from the real wealth they represent. They are instruments for enhancing this wealth and for influencing its allocation within and between nations." But as he goes on to stress, money is also a contractual store of value—its most fundamental function for those of us who never forgot our grade-school teachings about a penny saved and a penny earned. Here is the essential tension that underlies all problems of managing any monetary system. People who hold the cash are not necessarily satisfied to allow it to be used for the broader purposes of governments. The people who matter now are not the J. P. Morgans who could singlehandedly force a government to change policy, but the faceless and individually motiveless bureaucrats of the international corporations or the big commercial banks. Servants of capitalism all, they are primarily concerned with the security of the money left in their care. They vote, in effect, with their bank balances. It only takes a phone call to a foreign-exchange dealer from, say, the treasurer of

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Shell Oil, to move several millions (which may be awaiting payment to some Arab oil sheik) from London to Bonn. The money itself is a ruthlessly neutral quantity; it automatically moves to the place where its owners expect the highest return. For the Arab sheik, it is equally easy to shift money from a bank, where it may be doing some good by financing some enterprise, into a sterile deposit in gold. Mind you, even the Arab world sometimes pays attention to the use of money as a means. The Sheik of Abu Dhabi used to sleep with the nation's treasury under his bed in a trunkful of gold bars; he was deposed some years back and his successors put the wealth into a welfare program.

IN THE 19th century, the international monetary system was summed up by one word: gold. Putting aside the fact that the automatic gold system was something of a myth, just like the supposedly self-regulating capitalist system it mirrored, it did in fact maintain the value of money above the use to which it was put. As soon as a country found itself overspending, it was supposed to pay back its trading partners in gold and thereby rein in its spending. The result was a series of roller-coaster fluctuations in economic activity—bread lines or work lines. The aim of the system was to preserve the value of the money which the capitalists invested. That was the price investors demanded for the creation of an industrial infrastructure upon which 20th-century prosperity was built. One of the steps in the breakdown of the old order has been the painfully slow realization by governments that the welfare of their citizens was more important than the value of their money. Since the war, the result has been the phenomenal growth of the world economy on the one hand and a slow decline in the value of money on the other. All in all, it has not been a bad public policy mix, and the more astute holders of money have in fact done better out of it than most. Postwar prosperity has also grown out of world trade on an unprecedented scale; money must move

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across borders to finance it. The major problem in international monetary affairs has been the construction of a system that would allow national economies to move ahead at a pace they elect while they were at the same time being pulled together by international trade and finance.

The recurring monetary crises of the past decade are only the signature of the stresses within a system balanced precariously between maintaining wealth as a store of value and as a means for allocating that value. In Western capitalist economies, the market has made the allocations. Bankers have jumped frontiers hand in hand with multinational corporations faster than politicians could follow them. At times they have taken their country's money—the very essence of its sovereign power—along with them, and sometimes out of its control. Results range from the comical to the outrageous. Thousands of Frenchmen hiding francs in suitcases helped frustrate their government's efforts to stabilize its currency last year. A dozen New York banks virtually negated the administration's efforts to curb credit and slow down the economy by pulling back $13 billion from their branches in Europe during the first six months of last year and lending it to huge corporations for expansion.

Such events indicate that the international market alone cannot be allowed to allocate resources, and this will be the major monetary problem of the 1970's. The real objection to gold as an international standard is that its supply is not subject to rational control: the amount of money available becomes subject to the caprice of nature—either the condition of the Russian wheat crop, or the speed at which sweated labor in South Africa can dig the stuff out of holes in the ground. The real objection to allowing governments sole control of the value of their currency is that the value of money then becomes an end in itself, and often is elevated to a matter of national pride. The real objection to continuing the dollar as the field expedient for some sort of international money is the burden this imposes on those trying to construct a rational economic policy at home: the financial tail begins to wag the economic dog. For once, it can be reported that our own government led the way in rational reform, acting no doubt out of enlightened self-interest, in trying to relieve the strains on the dollar through the creation of Special Drawing Rights supervised by the International Monetary Fund. Such self-interest is usually the spring behind sensible (if not necessarily radical) reforms. It remains to be seen whether an administration of bankers in the U.S. Treasury will throw this country's political and financial weight behind reforms in the field of managing exchange rates in such a way as to put the movement of international capital under some constraints. Continued reform will mean exactly that if we are not going to allow foreign financial commitments to distort economic policy at home. Let the sad lesson of the British and their vain fight to save the pound stand as a reminder of what happens when money becomes more important than the things it can buy.

Cultural Transplants

THE INTELLECTUAL MIGRATION, EUROPE AND AMERICA, 1930-1960. Edited by BERNARD BAILYN and DONALD FLEMING. *Harvard University Press. 748 pp. $12.95.*

THE BAUHAUS. By HANS WINGLER. *M.I.T. Press. 696 pp. $55.00.*

Reviewed by MARTIN JAY

READING *The Intellectual Migration, Europe and America, 1930-1960* from cover to cover is an overwhelming experience. The major figures of the migration—the Einsteins and Fermis, Manns and Tillichs, Arendts and Panofskys—are of course already well-known to all, and in one's own special field, familiarity with the contributions of refugee scholars is almost inevitable. What generally remains hidden, however, is the full extent of the émigrés' impact on almost all areas of American intellectual life. How substantial that impact was can perhaps be demonstrated by the fact that *The Intellectual Migration* was published on the heels of Laura Fermi's comprehensive treatment of the same subject, *Illustrious Immigrants*, and yet does not seem unduly repetitive. Indeed, another volume of the same size (it approaches 750 pages) might well be fashioned out of the lacunae of this one: such fields as theology, history, political science, musicology, and the film are left untouched. Despite the accomplishment of this book, or perhaps more correctly because of the stimulus it should supply, this is an area which scholars will be exploring profitably for some time to come.*

Bernard Bailyn and Donald Fleming, the Harvard historians who first prepared this volume as part of a series of *Perspectives in American History*, sponsored by the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, have wisely resisted the temptation to attempt an exhaustive study of the entire refugee movement. Instead they have judiciously mixed personal reports of actual émigrés—"expert witnesses," as Paul Lazarsfeld calls them—with selected historical surveys and biographical sketches by friends of specific émigrés. Among the former are autobiographical accounts by Leo Szilard, the physicist and biologist who was a prime mover in the harnessing of nuclear energy, and two social scientists, Paul Lazarsfeld and Theodor W. Adorno, whose very different experiences in America provide strikingly contrasted perspectives on the significance of the movement as a whole. Among the latter are essays on fields ranging from art history to physics to psychoanalysis.

As is to be expected, not all of the contributions will be of equal interest to every reader, nor are all of equal quality. The essay on the brilliant mathematician and physicist, John Von Neumann, for ex-

MARTIN JAY's *review of* Weimar Germany's Left-Wing Intellectuals, *by Istvan Deak, appeared in our October 1969 number.*

* In fact, the periodical *Salmagundi* has recently devoted a 300-page special issue to "The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals."

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ample, written by four of his friends, is particularly inaccessible to a non-specialist audience (it is of course hard to imagine any discussion of modern mathematics which the lay reader might understand). Marie Jahoda is generally more successful in explaining why Freud's theories were so warmly received in this country, although she manages to ignore entirely such neo-Freudians as Erich Fromm and Karen Horney. Donald Fleming's piece on the influence of émigré physicists on the discovery of DNA succeeds perhaps more than any other essay in the book in capturing the dynamics of interaction between the refugees and their new environment. Carefully constructed, replete with dramatic irony, his treatment of Delbrück, Luria, Szilard, and Schrödinger is a clear reminder that the history of science need not be abstruse or impenetrable. Other essays by Colin Eisler on the art historians, Charles Wiener on the physicists, Jean Matter Mandler and George Mandler on the experimental psychologists, Herbert Feigl on the Vienna Circle, and William Jordy on the Bauhaus are somewhat drier, but cover the required ground with diligence and fairness. Harry Levin's reminiscence of Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer is lighter going, but still is successful in evoking a sense of what these giants of comparative literature were all about. The one remaining piece, H. Stuart Hughes's study of Franz Neumann, is a sensitive treatment of a figure whose relative eclipse raises some disturbing questions to which I shall return later on.

To GENERALIZE about the book as a whole is not a simple task, for the migration's richness and diversity made for a variety of very different experiences. Still, there are a few general themes which run throughout most of the essays. Bailyn and Fleming themselves point to several in their introduction, such as the problems caused by the depression and by the occasional expressions of anti-Semitism which greeted the émigrés. Another they mention is the already sharp sense of alienation which many of the intellectuals shared before they were forced to leave Europe, and which made their marginal existence in this country less difficult to accept. But perhaps most striking is the almost universal agreement in the fourteen essays about how remarkably open and receptive the American intellectual community was to the influx of new men and new ideas. Exceptions to the rule, as in the cases of the psychologist Karl Bühler, the art historian Hans Tietze, and the philosopher and sociologist, Adorno, are generally considered atypical oddities due to bad luck or personal inflexibility.

And yet, if one reads through *The Intellectual Migration* with some discernment, a pattern of selective rather than blanket acceptance of the refugees does begin to emerge. The first clue is provided by the introductory essay on the German background written by Peter Gay which, with slight changes, has been published independently as *Weimar Culture: the Outsider as Insider.** The work has already elicited wide comment and hence does not require extensive reappraisal here. What is important for our purposes is to note the distinction which Gay consistently draws between the progressive elements in the Weimar renaissance who best embodied the spirit of modernity and the regressive, *völkisch* counter-modernists who "hungered for wholeness," and in so doing prepared the way for Fascism. In all of his writings, from his earliest study of evolutionary social democracy to his latest work on the Enlightenment, Gay has championed the progressive, rationalistic, moderate virtues of what Thomas Mann once called the *Zivilisationsliterat*. In his introductory essay, he remains true to form, arguing for "the lesson of Bacon and Descartes and the Enlightenment: that one must confront the world and dominate it, that the cure for the ills of modernity is more, and the right kind of modernity."

But by holding so unproblematical a view of modernity and all that it implies in the way of domination of nature, Gay fails to understand the intrinsic connection between it and the counter-movement it has so often spawned. What he refuses to appreciate is that Enlightenment rationalism has often degenerated into a non-reflective tyranny of instrumental and technological thinking with results which are only now becoming apparent in America. Their impact on Germany came earlier because of the suddenness of its modernization and the inability of its inflexible social and political institutions to respond adequately. The reaction which followed was thus more confused and violent. Instead of seeking ways to reconcile man with nature without sacrificing the best in his cultural heritage, Weimar's anti-modernists tended to jettison culture entirely. The end product was the pseudo-naturalist Nazi ideology of "blood and soil," a warped and distorted caricature of an originally healthy protest. The violence which modernization had done to nature, both within man and outside of him, was answered by an even more explosive violence, a kind of Freudian return of the repressed. To condemn the latter without understanding its relation to the former is to oversimplify the dialectic of modern civilization. Not all who challenge the logic of technological domination can be rightly dismissed as anachronistic, romantic Luddites.

WITH THIS in mind, it is instructive to see which elements in the cultural life of Weimar actually did emigrate to America after 1933. Here as elsewhere in discussing the migration, generalizations are hazardous, but some identifiable patterns seem to have existed. First of all, it is quite clear that the first phase of the Weimar renaissance, the Expressionist movement, had burned itself out well before 1933. The "Revolt of the Son," as Gay characterizes Expressionism, actually contributed little to the migration. Only in the film industry, where directors like Fritz Lang enjoyed success, and in the visual arts, where refugees like Hans Hofmann contributed to the development of Abstract Expressionism, was an influence felt. Other members of the movement made their peace with the Nazis or turned to different aesthetic styles before emigrating to the United States.

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United States Government	143,699,829
Municipal	229,199,492
Other	4,789,589
	377,688,910
Loans	1,006,122,789
Direct lease financing	8,418,211
Bank premises and equipment—at cost, less accumulated depreciation	24,745,121
Customers' liability on acceptances	46,395,580
Other assets	21,383,269
Total Assets	$1,778,194,726
LIABILITIES:	
Deposits:	
Demand deposits	$ 729,051,793
Savings and time deposits	713,014,491
	1,442,066,284
Federal funds purchased and securities sold under agreement to repurchase	64,425,000
Funds borrowed	19,438,000
Mortgage notes payable	8,543,478
Acceptances outstanding	48,651,216
Dividends payable	43,866
Unearned income	19,248,138
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	21,036,639
Total Liabilities	1,623,452,621
RESERVE FOR POSSIBLE LOAN LOSSES	27,586,000
CAPITAL:	
Capital notes and debentures	26,180,000
Equity Capital:	
Common stock, $5 par value; authorized, issued and outstanding— 4,999,167 shares	24,995,835
Surplus	45,004,165
Undivided profits	30,976,105
	100,976,105
Total Capital	127,156,105
TOTAL LIABILITIES, RESERVE AND CAPITAL	$1,778,194,726

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The cultural movement which succeeded Expressionism in the mid-20's, on the other hand, did find a ready, even eager acceptance in this country. There seems to have been what Lazarsfeld calls a "structural fit" between the needs of America and the spirit of dispassionate, scientifically-oriented objectivity known as the *Neue Sachlichkeit* style. It was this movement, which Gay significantly places in his chapter on the "Revenge of the Father," which comes closest to his ideal of sober, progressive modernity. Many of the subsequent essays in *The Intellectual Migration* testify to the pervasiveness of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* influence. Most literally it appears in William Jordy's account of the Bauhaus which developed an architecture which "would be *technologically* objective in utilizing modern techniques of building and in searching for ideal standards or norms that might be mass produced. It would be *aesthetically* objective in the elemental 'pure' forms it used. It would be *sociologically* objective in its quest for an architecture consonant with the metropolitan culture of the modern world. . . . It would be *psychically* and *symbolically* objective in accepting the clarity, lucidity, tautness, and dynamism assumed to be the qualities of modern life. . . ." As a ride down Park Avenue will easily confirm, America was more than ready for the "International Style."

FURTHER evidence of the significance of the Bauhaus as more than merely one architectural school among others can be found in Hans Wingler's *The Bauhaus*. Less to be read than read in, this exhaustive collection of documents and illustrations of all imaginable kinds is a valuable source book for anyone with a serious interest in the movement and a coffee table sturdy enough to bear its massive weight. The full range of the Bauhaus's work—furniture design, weaving, typography, theater, city planning, even the dance were among its concerns—is represented in Wingler's collection. What emerges from its pages is a sense of the enormous creative dynamism of the Bauhaus's earliest years and of the tenacity of its leaders in the face of increasing harassment from the Right in the period preceding its forced closing. There is also much to substantiate Gay's remark that "what Gropius taught, and what most Germans did not want to learn, was the lesson of Bacon and Descartes and the Enlightenment. . . ."

In one of the many manifestoes which dot the movement's history, Oskar Schlemmer sought in 1923 to articulate the Bauhaus philosophy. After describing the "cult of the unconscious and of the unexplainable" that was Expressionism, Schlemmer outlined "the next faith" which, though he did not use the actual phrase, was clearly the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. "Reason and Science, 'man's greatest powers,'" he wrote, "are the regents and the engineer is the sedate executor of unlimited possibilities. . . . The speed and supertension of commercialism make expediency and utility the measure of all effectiveness, and calculation seizes the transcendent world: art becomes a logarithm. It, long bereft of its name, lives a life after death, in the monument of the cube and the colored square. Religion is the precise process of thinking, and God is dead." The Bauhaus, he hoped, would combine the best in both movements to become "an idealism of activity that embraces, penetrates, and unites art, science, and technology. . . ."

By the time of the emigration, however, as Jordy stresses, the cutting edge of the Bauhaus had already been somewhat dulled. Modernism may have been an embattled idea in Germany; in America it was the prevailing orthodoxy. Undeterred by the spirited resistance of a few diehards like Frank Lloyd Wright, who castigated the new "cardboard style," the influence of the Bauhaus spread rapidly—and, as is so often the case with cultural success, its critical, polemical force declined. In the prospectus for the "New Bauhaus" established in Chicago in 1937, Charles Morris wrote, ". . . if the artist is really to function in the modern world, he must feel himself a part of it, and to have this sense of social integration he must command the instruments and materials of that world. . . . The New Bauhaus shows deep wisdom in using contemporary science and philosophy in its educational task of reintegrating the artist into the common life." Instead of the dynamic synthesis of Expressionism and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* suggested in Schlemmer's manifesto, the Bauhaus in America seemed too often to represent only the latter. Passing through Walter Gropius's tired, impersonal graduate center at Harvard, one gets the feeling that art has indeed become a logarithm. Within the Bauhaus itself, as one of the documents in Wingler's collection shows, alarm over this tendency did exist. In 1955, a dissident group at the Institute of Design connected with the Illinois Institute of Technology issued yet another Bauhaus manifesto. "We must control the application of material, technique, science, and art not only economically, but also biologically and socially," it proclaimed. "The common denominator is the fundamental acknowledgement of human needs; the task is to recognize the moral obligation in satisfying these needs, and the aim is to produce for human needs, not for profit." This was a lesson which technological instrumentalism had clearly forgotten.

TO RETURN to other essays in *The Intellectual Migration*, it can be seen that elsewhere the new objectivity was also clearly influential. The empirically oriented, value-neutral Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle enjoyed a much wider academic success in America than did other continental schools of philosophy such as existentialism or phenomenology. And as Herbert Feigl writes of two of its leading exponents, "Neurath and Carnap felt that the Circle's philosophy was an expression of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* which was part of the ideology of the Bauhaus." In the social sciences, Paul Lazarsfeld's research techniques, parallel in their stress on empirical verification and quantification to the philosophy of the Vienna Circle, were enthusiastically absorbed into the behaviorist tradition in America. (Lazarsfeld's own methodological approach was more complex than that, as he emphasizes in his essay,

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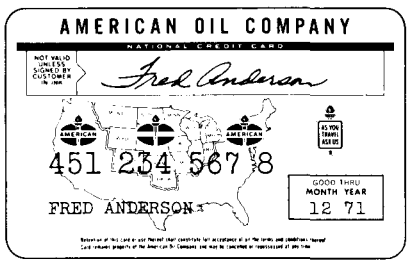

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but his major impact was in this area.) His skill as a "managerial scholar," to use his own term, helped him organize the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia which served as a model for similar centers throughout the country. Lazarsfeld's example, it should be added, is a good antidote to the oversimplified distinction often drawn between "speculative" European and "empirical" American social science.

WHEN EMIGRES came with ideas diverging sharply from the *Neue Sachlichkeit* spirit, however, their reception was often less cordial. The Mandlers' article, for example, shows that the Gestaltists never really overcame a pariah status to penetrate the citadels of behaviorism in the major universities. In the case of psychoanalysis, its popular (and popularized) acceptance was bought at the cost of its critical force. The goal of therapy as it was practiced by many analysts was adjustment to life as it is, rather than as it might be. Freud's most disturbing ideas, those contained in his later metapsychological speculations, were discredited and practically forgotten. Even more strikingly, the story of Theodor W. Adorno expresses the resistance of American intellectual life to truly alien modes of thought. The type of dialectical social research he and his colleagues at the Institute for Social Research practiced never really had much of an impact in this country, despite the success of *The Authoritarian Personality* which they helped coauthor. Only with the recent notoriety of Herbert Marcuse have some of their ideas received a widespread, although still generally hostile, hearing.

The member of the Institute for Social Research whose influence was the greatest during the 40's was Franz Neumann. But as H. Stuart Hughes shows, after some time in America, Neumann's convictions began to waver and as a result his legacy was highly ambiguous. From the Marxism of his early years, Neumann slowly turned with the pressure of events to an uneasy liberalism which lacked the creative incisiveness of his earlier commitment. One is reminded here of what Erich Heller once said of another refugee who became a liberal democrat in his later years, albeit from a very different direction. ". . . The irritating truth," Heller wrote of Thomas Mann, "is that he was an incomparably profounder political thinker when he was a 'non-political' man, a political 'obscurantist,' and a 'reactionary,' than ever as the advocate of democracy, progress, and more recently, 'coexistence'. . . ." *Behemoth,* the major achievement of Neumann's Marxist period, was soon "superseded" by other analyses of Nazism claiming to be less "dogmatic." As Hughes writes, "Unquestionably, the postwar denigration of Neumann's work reflected the cold war mentality in the United States." Perhaps the final irony is that his most important students have been non-Marxist intellectual historians like Peter Gay.

ONE OF the clearest indications of Neumann's Americanization was, strange as it may seem, the growing interest he showed in the work of another German, Max Weber. In Germany, Weber had been a relatively isolated figure among social scientists, many of whom thought him too empirical. It was only when his work "emigrated" to America, partly through the efforts of refugees and partly through the labors of Talcott Parsons, that, in Neumann's words, "Weber really came to life." Although *The Intellectual Migration* doesn't contain an extensive discussion of Weber's impact on America, his acceptance correlates perfectly with the reception given to other scholars expressing the *Neue Sachlichkeit* style who actually settled in this country. His stress on rationalization and bureaucratization as the inevitable telos of modern society fit well with prevailing trends in America. So too did his diminution of the differences between capitalism and socialism, which he fundamentally saw as two alternative modes of modernization. The first of his major works to become well-known in this country was *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* which was taken, rightly or wrongly, as a refutation of Marx's explanation for the growth of capitalism. But perhaps most significantly, his strongly held belief in the possibility of a value-free social science, expressed in its classic form in his essay on "Science as a Vocation," corresponded without any difficulties to the dispassionate "objectivity" of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* ethic. It would of course be misleading to dismiss Weber as a simple apologist for modernity; his success in America was doubtless also a result of the brilliance and variety of his work. Still, it should be noted that his acceptance, like that of so many actual émigrés, was in part a product of the "structural fit" between his ideas and the prevailing tendencies of American thought.

Of all the figures mentioned in *The Intellectual Migration,* Leo Szilard is perhaps the most representative. His scientific acumen was welcomed by the American government which supported his efforts to build the first nuclear weapon. In fact, he was the driving force behind Einstein's famous letter of August 1939 to Roosevelt which informed the government of the possibility of constructing the bomb. But once the war with Germany was over, Szilard had serious second thoughts about using what he had intended as a defensive weapon for offensive purposes against Japan. His desperate efforts to mobilize the scientific community to bring pressure on the government were ultimately fruitless. What is even more disturbing is that his personal account of the Truman administration's refusal to listen to his arguments gives further credence to the thesis of revisionist historians like Gar Alperovitz that the primary purpose of using the bomb on Japanese cities was to impress the Russians with our military strength rather than to end the war as swiftly as possible. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Szilard's sense of personal responsibility was an important factor in his decision to leave physics for the more life-affirming field of biology.

WHAT COMES out of all this is a sense that America's welcome was not as undiscriminating as a cursory glance at the number and variety of refugees would imply. Those who were most warmly received

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were the Weimar "modernists" whose technical skills, stress on "scientific" objectivity, and instrumental rationality were best suited to the prevailing trends of American life. That counter-examples to this generalization doubtless exist is unquestionable, but a careful reading of *The Intellectual Migration* does seem to provide substantial evidence in its favor. Not that this is really very surprising, since any society has only a certain threshold of tolerance when it comes to external stimuli. And, of course, in comparison with England, the other country most likely to have absorbed the émigrés, America's threshhold was rather high. Still, it would be misleading to think that when Hitler shook the tree, to use Walter Cook's metaphor, America gathered up all of the apples without selecting those likely to be most palatable. Only today, when the diseconomies of the American *Neue Sachlichkeit* are becoming increasingly evident, is it possible to see the cost of our subtle inhospitalities.

The Professor & the Police

BEING BUSTED. By LESLIE A. FIEDLER. *Stein and Day. 225 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by WALTER GOODMAN

LESLIE FIEDLER, along with his wife, two sons, a daughter-in-law, and two friends of one of the sons, was busted in Buffalo in April 1967. The police raided his house in search of marijuana, apparently found what they had come to find (left there for the purpose by a police informer, says Fiedler), and arrested all present. The charge against Fiedler and his wife: "maintaining a premise" where the drug had been found.

Fiedler's version of the arrest and attendant events—which appeared first in an article in the *New York Review of Books* and is reprinted here as "Exhibit A"—is incomplete, but convincing as far as it goes. He does not, with sufficient reason, tell us whether his children smoke pot, but he attests

WALTER GOODMAN's *most recent article, "1968," appeared in our issue of December 1969.*

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that he and his wife do not. More to the issue, his account of how he attracted the displeasure of proper Buffaloians (Buffaloes?) by his unhidden sympathies for the exasperating young—he was student adviser to a campus group dedicated to the legalization of marijuana; his harassment by the police and their exploitation of a pathetic young girl to infiltrate his home, a transmitter strapped to her body, and inform against his family; the petty spites of neighbors after the event and the pressures of businessmen—all these ring depressingly true, and they form the starting point of an engagingly discursive book.

Being Busted, Fiedler tells us early, is "despite its autobiographical form, a book not about me, or indeed individuals at all, so much as one about cultural and social change between 1933, when I just missed being arrested, and 1967, when I made it at last. Its true subject is the endless war, sometimes cold, sometimes hot, between the dissenter and the imperfect society." The dissenter, it turns out, is no closer to perfection than the society. The featured battles in Fiedler's war are an impromptu Communist rally in depression-time Newark, at which the incipient Trotskyite and youthful trashcan orator runs away from the riot squad; an extended and ambiguously successful campaign by Professor of English Fiedler to bring down the President of the University of Montana, for reasons not made clear beyond the fact that he somehow stood for the "imperfect society"; and, finally, the Buffalo bust. Although the faces in these incidents remain fuzzy, Fiedler conveys a strong sense of place and period—Jewish Newark in the 30's; exotically American Montana, which got a surprising hold on the young teacher whose literary-political articles of the time marked him as an irredeemable New Yorker, Upper West Side sub-species; and, back East, the State University of New York at Buffalo, in the era of the Clash of the Generations.

Fiedler's essays and stories over the years have brought him the reputation of placing himself, whether instinctively or by design, where the action is. He seems testy now about being constantly put down as "controversial"—but concedes that he does take satisfaction in being where it's at. In the 40's, he wrote for *Partisan Review* and the *New Leader*; in the 50's for COMMENTARY and *Encounter*; in the 60's he turned to *Playboy* and *Ramparts*. There are obvious criticisms to be made of this apparent craving to be in and to be celebrated as being in, but when accompanied by as substantial an intelligence as Fiedler's, it has its virtues too, and these win out here. His alertness to the impulses at work on campus can make us more alert; his responsiveness to the fast-running, cultural-political-psychological currents of the young can quicken our responses. That is worth something at a time when, as he observes, "the spokesmen for town and campus confront each other in mutual bafflement, mutual incomprehension; they cannot even abuse one another properly; for what seems to one an insult is for the other an honorific." Fiedler thinks of himself as a double-agent—and with his head in the over-fifty generation and his heart in the generation of the under-thirties, he can indeed bear important messages back and forth across that famous Gap.

THOUGH FIEDLER is nothing if not ambivalent, both about his own generation and that of his students ("Be faithful to your ambivalence," he advised himself as the students at Buffalo began to do their thing), he lives up to his role as a partisan of Now. Bruno Bettelheim charges him with suffering from a need to be loved by the young—not an unmitigated fault in a teacher. When discussing students, he expatiates appreciatively on the brightest of them, the most interesting, the most idealistic; whereas on this side of the Gap, he finds mainly inhibitions, prejudices, and a prevailing stupidity. Alas, all are in ample supply—but the juxtaposition of the dim-witted middle-aged with the glowing young is misleading. For the offspring of the benighted are not by and large running with

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the radicals; most of them may be found any Saturday afternoon in season whooping on the home team at State U. And the parents of the students who are stirring up the nation's campuses are the people who most likely sent contributions to the Fiedler Defense Fund. Fiedler recognizes this, of course; he is amusingly aware of the anomaly of a literary man having to depend for support on readers of the *Saturday Review*. If at moments he tends to describe the enemy in the style of the Old Leftist trying to purchase entry into the New Left, it isn't because he doesn't know better; it's because he has been shaken by his experience—as, indeed, it must shake us all.

It's devilishly difficult to write of one's victimization by the uncomprehending law without coming on as something of a martyr, and there are passages where Fiedler's proclivity for dramatic summation causes him to succumb: "Once deciphered, 'maintaining a premise' turns out to mean creating a context, a milieu, an intellectual atmosphere in which the habits of the young are understood rather than condemned out of hand; their foibles responded to with sympathy and love rather than distrust and fear; the freedom necessary to their further growth sponsored and protected rather than restricted and crushed by an appeal to force and the intervention of the police." This kind of compliment is better left to third parties—yet Fiedler usually recovers quickly and identifies his bouts of paranoia and self-congratulation for what they are. Nor is he able to stay angry for long before he is overtaken by some humorous slant to his predicament, and a humorous angry man is a most gratifying figure in this time of the Literature of Pure Rage.

Where the violation of his privacy by the Buffalo police is concerned, Fiedler's case is likely to do better with his readers than it has so far done with the courts. Yet a good number of his partisans on the civil-liberties issue are likely to balk at his advocacy of the legalization of marijuana. Fiedler would probably reply that that is their hang-up, and one must concede that if it were possible to think of marijuana without thinking also of other, more fearsome drugs, of rock music and mass Happenings, of promiscuous sex and pornography and long hair—if that were possible, then our legislators might be able to deal sensibly with the problem, as they have begun to deal with such problems as birth control, abortion, divorce. Which is to say, they would surely reduce the penalties that now attend the enjoyment of pot and then, given some time to accustom themselves to the idea, might even wipe the books clean of the matter.

Now, I cannot pretend that the prospect of having boys and girls in their teens and twenties blowing their minds with readily available drugs makes my mind any easier. Still, from what I have read about marijuana, I have not been able to bolster my in-built misgivings with reasons sufficient to require a ban. And if the reasons for the existing restrictions are dubious, their effects, as exemplified by the Fiedler case and scores of less advertised cases, are pernicious. Since the smoking of pot is a personal matter, not a public nuisance, the periodic busts necessarily constitute an attack on privacy. They call for the basest kind of police activity—informing, spying, faking evidence. (To plant marijuana on a fire escape is an offense; to plant it on a suspect seems to be accepted police practice. This drug seems to turn *non*-users on.) The nighttime raids on persons who comprise anything but a "criminal element" seem to serve as a release for the more vindictive impulses of the police against the children of privilege. And all to what social purpose?

Enforcement of the marijuana laws is proving impossible—but the attempt to make *examples* by raids on campuses and other places where the young gather can only harden their mistrust of elders who are able to indulge their tastes for cancer-causing cigarettes and accident-causing alcohol without statutory hindrance. The physical and social effects of marijuana are uncertain, but the ef-

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fects of the penalties for its possession and use are clear—and they have little to commend them. That is the simplest message of this intelligent and very human book.

Becoming American

THE EDUCATION OF ABRAHAM CAHAN. Introduction by Leon Stein. Translated by Leon Stein, Abraham P. Conan, and Lynn Davison. *Jewish Publication Society. 450 pp. $7.50.*

THE DOWNTOWN JEWS. By RONALD SANDERS. *Harper & Row. 477 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

IN THE WORLD of our fathers Abraham Cahan was a formidable presence. He had come to America in 1882, part of the first wave of East European immigrants escaping the pogroms that followed the assassination of Alexander II. In the Lower East Side he then rose to prominence and power as editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, strategist and advisor for the garment unions, and caustic arbiter of the new Yiddish theater and literature. Cahan was the kind of publicist who stands uneasily between intellectuals and masses, transmitting the sentiments of one to the other, yet soon making his position into a sort of fulcrum-point for a Bonapartist exercise of his will. Precisely his uncertainties made him a marvelous agent for picking up and releasing the moods of his moment. Precisely his oscillations between hoping to be a serious writer and wanting to serve as a popular tribune yielded him a notable authority in the Lower East Side, where so many others, at varying levels of cultivation, were torn by similar conflicts.

Cahan became a major spokesman for the immigrant masses because he combined within himself their sacred and worldly aspirations, and, more important, managed to articulate these before the masses could do so themselves. In his speeches and writings they found a mirror of their yearnings, which was possible only because finally he was not one of them. He told them what they really felt—and despite his frequent arrogance and occasional philistinism, it now seems he was mostly right. Cahan helped lay the basis for the Yiddish culture that bloomed in the Lower East Side, and at the very same time he worked mightily toward its disintegration. I was going to say worked "for" its disintegration, but I am not sure: how conscious was he, or could anyone be, that the culture of immigrant Yiddish would end by destroying itself, indeed would have to destroy itself at the very moment it reached a blazing fulfillment? How could anyone have known, or found it bearable to acknowledge, that the more people like Cahan created a secure subculture in the Lower East Side, the more they were clearing the way for the leap into America?

Two books have now appeared which provide rich materials about Cahan's life as Yiddish spokesman. The one edited by Mr. Stein consists of the first two volumes from Cahan's five-volume autobiography, *Bleter fun Mein Leben*, regarded within the Yiddish world as something of a classic for its portrayal of that arc of experience which proceeds from 19th-century Russia to America in the 20's. These first two volumes of *Bleter* bring Cahan's story to the turn of the century; the most interesting, I would judge, is the third, still untranslated and describing the intellectual ferment in which the *Forward* was born. Mr. Sanders's book, drawing heavily from *Bleter*, is a biography of Cahan with lengthy historical interludes about social life, culture, and politics in the Lower East Side.

Both are valuable books, and both are mislabeled. Mr. Stein has done Cahan no favor by abandoning the modest title of the Yiddish and providing a title in English which calls forth comparisons Cahan neither can nor should have to sustain. Precisely the strand of contemplativeness that so enriches Henry Adams's autobiography is all but absent in Cahan's. And Mr. Sanders's title, *The Downtown Jews*, promises more than he delivers: this book is not quite the historical overview of immigrant Jewish experience one is led to expect.

Cahan was a gifted writer, though, oddly enough, more gifted in English, a language he struggled to master in night school, than in his native Yiddish. His novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, which he composed in English, is a minor masterpiece of genre realism. In Yiddish, however, he was mostly a writer of the moment, a popularizer and polemicist; his style lacks the pithiness of a Hayim Greenberg or the vivacity of an Abraham Koralnik, Yiddish essayists less influential than he. Though not written directly for the newspapers, Cahan's autobiography betrays the marks of a long journalistic career: short fragments of narrative and recollection, overfocused vignettes, the subordination of self to expository line. There is also what might be called a Litvak dryness or reticence in his prose, as if to allow personality freedom would be to threaten that claim to "the universal" which is so dear to Yiddish publicists. (Still, this is far better than our own recent modes of confessional autobiography, in which personality has expanded into a kind of psychic cancer.)

IF THE reader becomes reconciled to Cahan's stylistic limitations and to his tacit convention that inner life must be inferred rather than represented, then his memoirs have great value. They span the three phases of immigrant Jewish mobility: from the old country to the Lower East Side and then to the world of America. (We leave Cahan at the turn of the century as he visits William Dean Howells and is encouraged by that kindest of American writers to pursue a literary career in English.) Most of the memoir literature about the immigrant experience, whether in Yiddish or English, really captures only two of these phases, even though it may touch upon all three; and none, to my knowledge, has the authority of Cahan's volumes. Repeatedly there are paragraphs in which—for all, perhaps because of, his dryness and

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constraint—Cahan packs the essence of an entire mode of experience and perception. Here is a passage about his poverty-stricken childhood in Vilna:

> . . . one of us lost the penny his mother had given him to buy a roll for lunch. As we sat around the table in our cheder Yankel Posner made each of us break off a piece of our roll. Silently, each placed his piece of roll in front of the boy who had lost his penny. With bent head and downcast eyes, like a mourner, he ate every crumb.

A single discreet phrase in the final sentence pulls this passage out of mere dull notation; it is the mark of the writer who has learned his craft. Or notice the keen eye Cahan displays for the differences between native and immigrant manners, as he recalls his own fastidiousness in relation to both the Americans and the noisy immigrant Jews of the 1880's and 1890's:

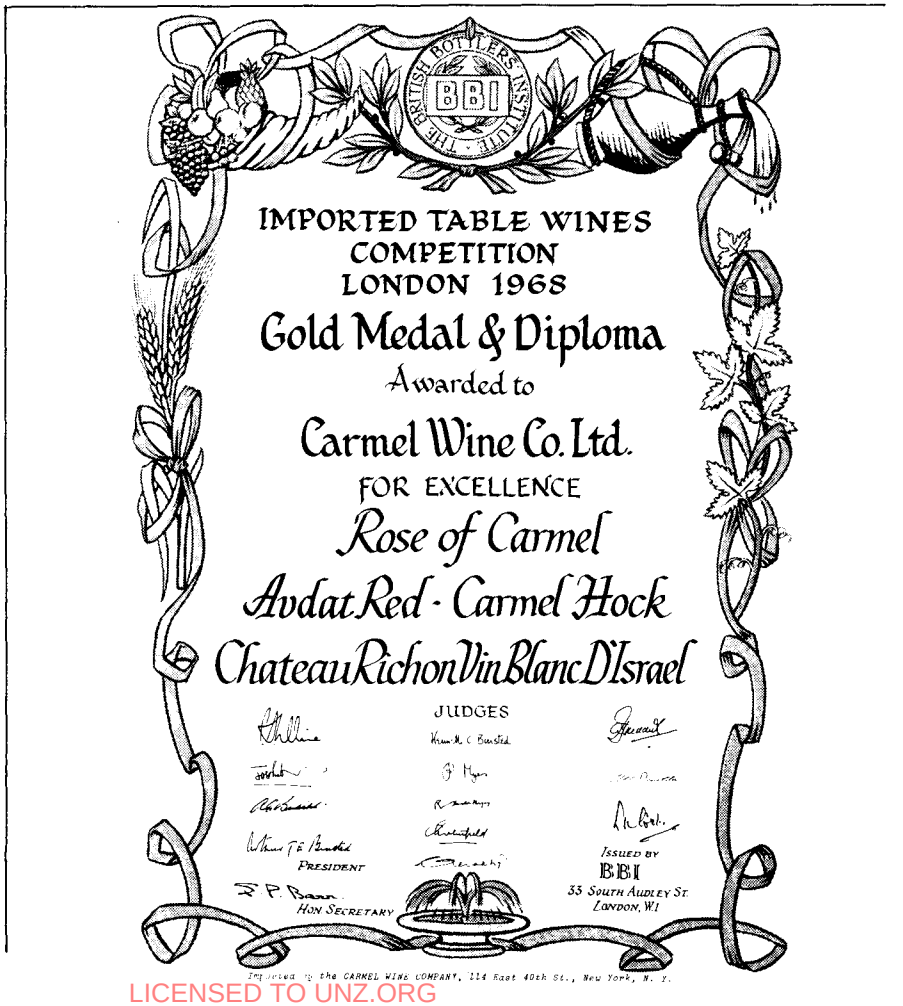
> I noticed how an American drinks coffee. If the coffee is too hot, he pours a little cold water into it and drinks on. Or, instead of spreading the pat of butter on his bread as we did at home, he places it whole on the slice and deposits the whole thing in his mouth.
>
> The water in the coffee, the pat of butter on the bread, the "oll-rite" and the "never mine," and Hester Street pronounced like Esther Street, and Suffolk Street pronounced by Jews as Soffick [which means doubt] Essex Street pronounced Essig [which means vinegar], the terrible heat and the large chunks of ice dragged into the houses with hooks, the coarse cry of "Ice! Ice!"—all this and much more grated against my longing, suffering soul.

MR. SANDERS'S book is completely intelligent and remarkably free of all the failures of tone his subject steadily invites. Well-composed in its individual parts, the overall structure leaves me puzzled, for it is a book either too or not sufficiently ambitious. As biography it is overloaded with historical material, not all of it immediately to the point, but as historical portrait it is thin and incomplete. The problem has to do with Mr. Sanders's decision to filter the Lower East Side experience through the story of Cahan's life, an effort that cannot succeed for the simple reason that the material is too rich and diversified to be neatly packed into or near a biographical account. As a result Mr. Sanders presents, for example, an interesting chapter on the relationship between Jacob Gordin and Cahan, only to leave the matter hanging in mid-air. Gordin's role in the Yiddish theater can't really be understood unless it is seen as part of a continuous story, and that story Mr. Sanders does not present. The same holds for the Yiddish press, the Jewish unions, etc., so that a book pleasing in its parts is unfulfilled in its entirety.

The best parts are those focusing on Cahan himself, whom Mr. Sanders sees as a somewhat hard-shelled man beset by those uncertainties of value that by now have become mythic commonplaces of our culture:

> Cahan, after a time of seemingly endless struggles and innumerable moments of despair, had lived out an American success story, after all. He was a fifty-year-old smiling public man; his outer life had become the expression of two generations of Jewish immigrants. . . . Who could deny that this destiny was the projection of something that had risen from deep within himself? And yet something else remained locked within, as ineradicable as it was inexpressive, which insisted that all this activity, all this success, all this mastery of an American reality, was false, a violation of its own hidden truth.

This striking passage sounds almost like Cahan making his farewell to David Levinsky, and indeed Mr. Sanders is aware of the psychic parallels between his subject and the subject of his subject. He sees Levinsky's unhappiness as a projection of intellectual guilt over the abandonment of early revolutionary beliefs, and Levinsky's failures with women as tokens of Cahan's hidden conviction of a failure, perhaps even a be-



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trayal, of spirit: "an abortive love affair with . . . his potentialities for socialist fulfillment," "she . . . represents that world of the spirit which Levinsky, in his choice of a business career, has denied himself."

Some years ago Isaac Rosenfeld, writing about Cahan's novel in these pages,* took the portrayal of Levinsky at something closer to face value. "Levinsky's character was formed by hunger," remarked Rosenfeld. All his experiences

> contain, as their common element, a core of permanent dissatisfaction . . . dissatisfaction has become an organic habit, a form which determines his apprehension of experience in general . . . the events in his life are predetermined, in large measure, by what he had already become . . . Levinsky is a man who cannot feel at home with his desires.

These two readings of Cahan's novel do not contradict one another, but I think Rosenfeld's cuts a shade deeper. It sees Cahan-Levinsky as an overdetermined character whose peculiarities are strongly linked to his culture. Throughout *The Rise of David Levinsky* one is aware of a film of irritation, and Mr. Sanders is keen at showing how this same film covers Cahan's own life as well. What, one finds oneself wondering, is the source of this irritation? I would say: it is the irritation of a man who has resigned himself to the costs his character exacts from him. His private self makes demands which his culture has helped to formulate but cannot satisfy; his public role requires an imperiousness of voice and a constraint upon talent that weary him.

Speculations of this kind ought not to encourage any depreciation of Cahan's historical place or literary gifts. Looking back upon the incongruities between Cahan's early expectations and later realizations, one can only admire his toughness and reflect a little wryly upon "the cunning of history." And also, perhaps, remember with some fraternal feeling Erik Erikson's remark that "a man's conflicts represent what he 'really' is."

* "America, Land of the Sad Millionaire," August 1952.

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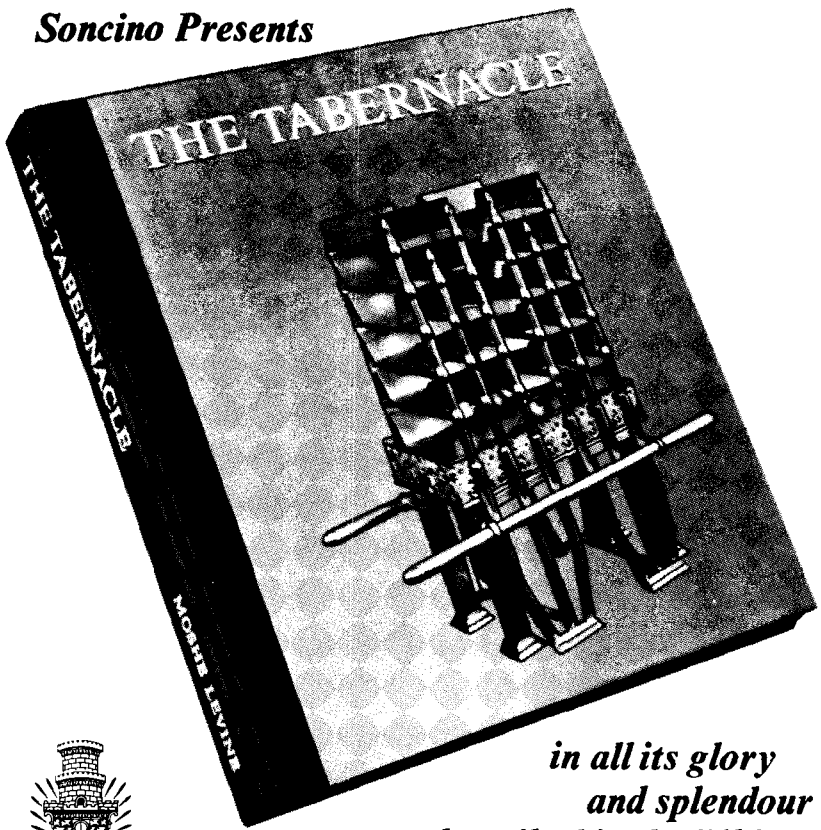

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